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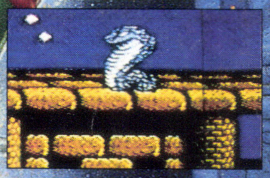
December 1990

ON-SCREEN HOOPS:
Our Survey Lists Hard Court Action for Console and Computer

Watch Out—Here Come the Turtles Again! We've Got a Review of Ultra's TMNT II for the NES

MAPS AND TIPS:
BRØDERBUND'S



Battle of Olympus, Part III

ACCLAIM'S

Swords and Serpents, Part II

FROM SILVER SCREEN TO HOME SCREEN—
HOW MOVIES BECOME GAMES

TurboGrafx-16 Fans! Our Buyer's Guide Shows All the Latest TurboChip and CD Games!

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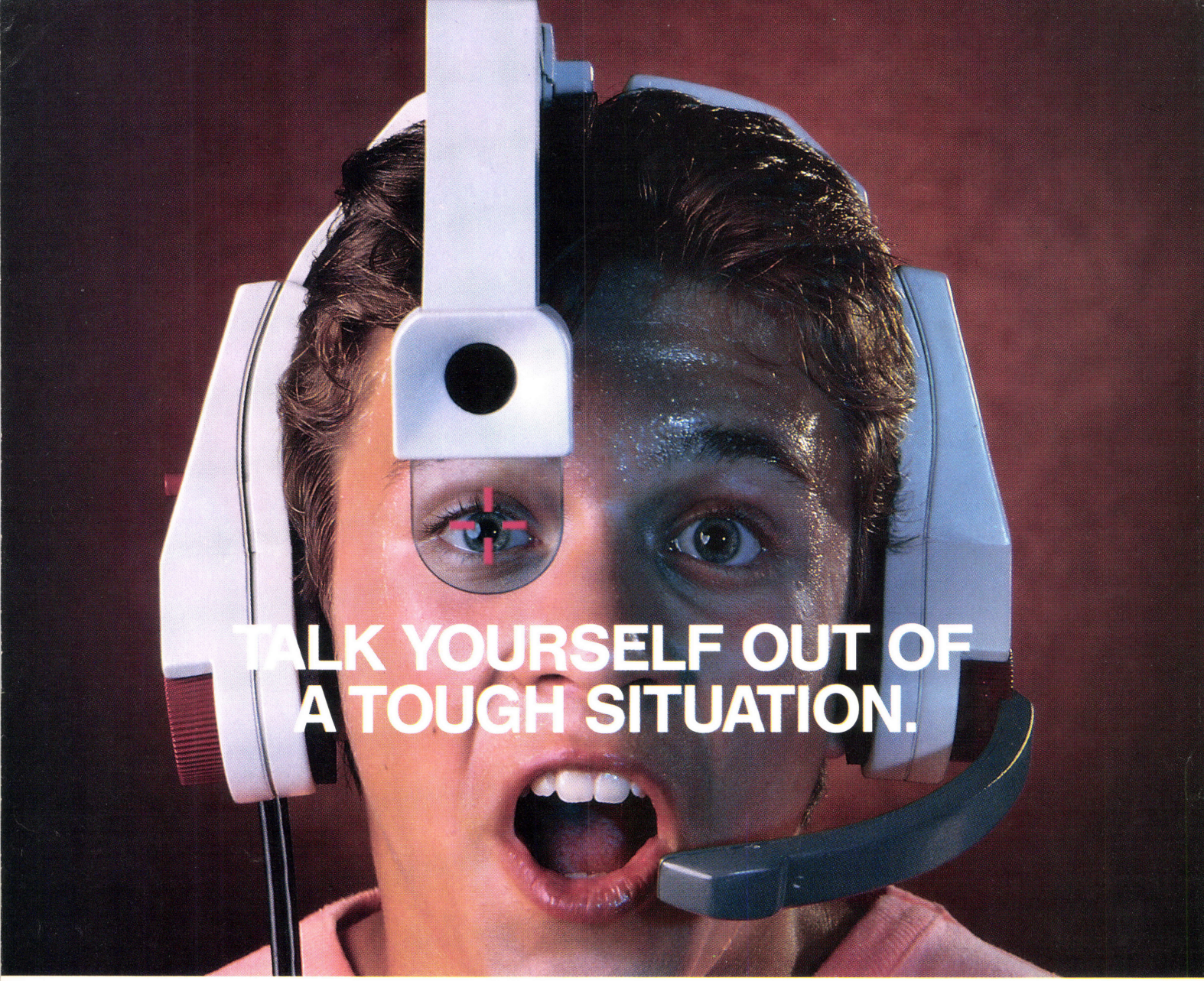

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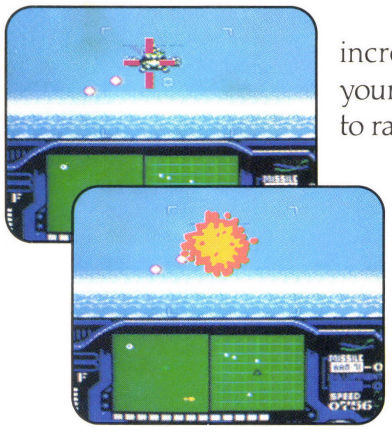

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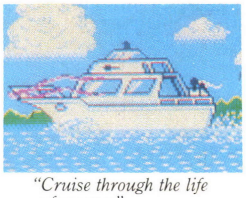

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CIRCLE #102 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

Four Billion Years Of Evolution Is About To Go Down The Pooper.

Fight or be flushed! Those are your only options as you team with a fellow commando and battle the galaxy's greatest foe—Red Falcon.

Never, not even in the original arcade version, has computer warfare been this devastating. At every level Red's assault will intensify as he punishes earth with tanks, electro zappers and an army of alien annihilators. These ruthless characters are so tough, they often engulf half the battlefield!

To blast through Red's full course menu of mayhem, featuring Fort Fire Storm and the Tropics of Torture, you'll need marksmanship prowess with a Machine Gun, Spread Gun, Rocket Launcher and Laser. You'll also need multiple commando skills to overcome both side and overhead war perspectives. Ultimately though to save every man, woman, child and amoeba, you must clog up Red's attack and snatch victory from the jaws of defeat.

Super C is programmed with realistic bit-map explosions and aliens that replicate the size of those in the original arcade version. It also supports Ad Lib™ and Tandy® Sound Boards.

Super C is a one or two player game available for: Amiga,® IBM®/ 100% compatibles, Tandy® 1000.

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CIRCLE #103 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

Cover: The Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles are hot, and Ultra has brought them back to the NES for more martial-arts action. Turn to page 66 to read the review of this new cartridge.

Cover Art: Alan Hunter

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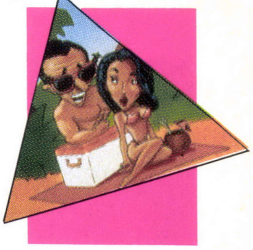

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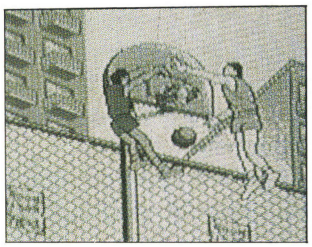

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JEFFREY EISENBERG
JE PUBLISHER'S REPRESENTATIVES
Address all inquiries:
11150 West Olympic Blvd., Suite 600
Los Angeles, CA 90064
(213) 479-6844
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For advertising inquiries only:
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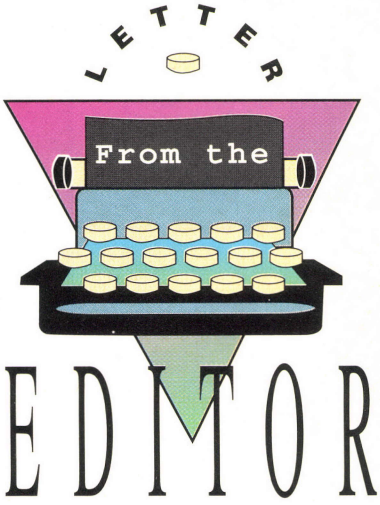
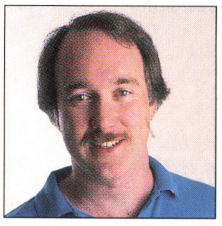


It's hard to believe that we've been doing VIDEOGAMES & COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT for two years now, but looking in the archives shows our first issue has a December 1988 cover date. Yessir, that *scrawny* 96-page magazine, with the now-classic illustration of Jason—the hero in Sunsoft's *Blaster Master*—by Alan Hunter gracing the glossy cover, seems so long ago.



Now you sit reading my monthly chatter page, holding more of a book than a magazine. The evolution of VG&CE comes from a lot of contributors, and now, like a long-winded speech from an Oscar winner, I'll try to thank a few of them for their help:

• First and foremost, thanks—and a high level of congratulations—go to Lee Pappas, who began this magazine with a small but determined staff of freelance contributors, myself included, to put together what then seemed to be an impossible amount of material. Over time, Lee has come to the attention of the various video-game companies, helping VG&CE become the leading source of information.

• Thanks to all the freelance writers and artists whose names have filled the thousands of pages we've printed since the start. Their words and brush strokes have helped VG&CE earn the reputation as *the* magazine in our field with hard-hitting news, honest opinions and good-looking pages.

• Particularly vigorous handshakes go to Clayton Walnum, who not only has my vote for most reliable writer in the business, but has also helped get this editor up to speed at simply being an editor.

• To our computer-game experts, Arnie Katz, Bill Kunkel and Joyce Worley, kudos for being able to compile the sheer volume of double-spaced pages that we request each month. Their experience in gamedom has no equal, and their contribution to VG&CE is awesome.

• Behind the scenes are all the people who help put this magazine together each issue, and they get a hearty pat on the back. Particular mention goes to Maxine, Cathy, Norma, Colleen and Donn, the latest crew to toil on VG&CE, who have helped our recent growth move along smoothly, making VG&CE look better and make sense while providing the highest content of game information possible.

• Thanks and fare-thee-wells to Jeff Eisenberg, our advertising representative from the start, who marks his last issue of VG&CE. We wish Jeff the absolute best at whatever endeavors he undertakes.

• Final thanks go to you, the reader, who has stuck with us, helping us with advice and boosting us with your letters. Let's raise a glass in a toast for another two years, and another, and another....

—Andy Eddy, Executive Editor

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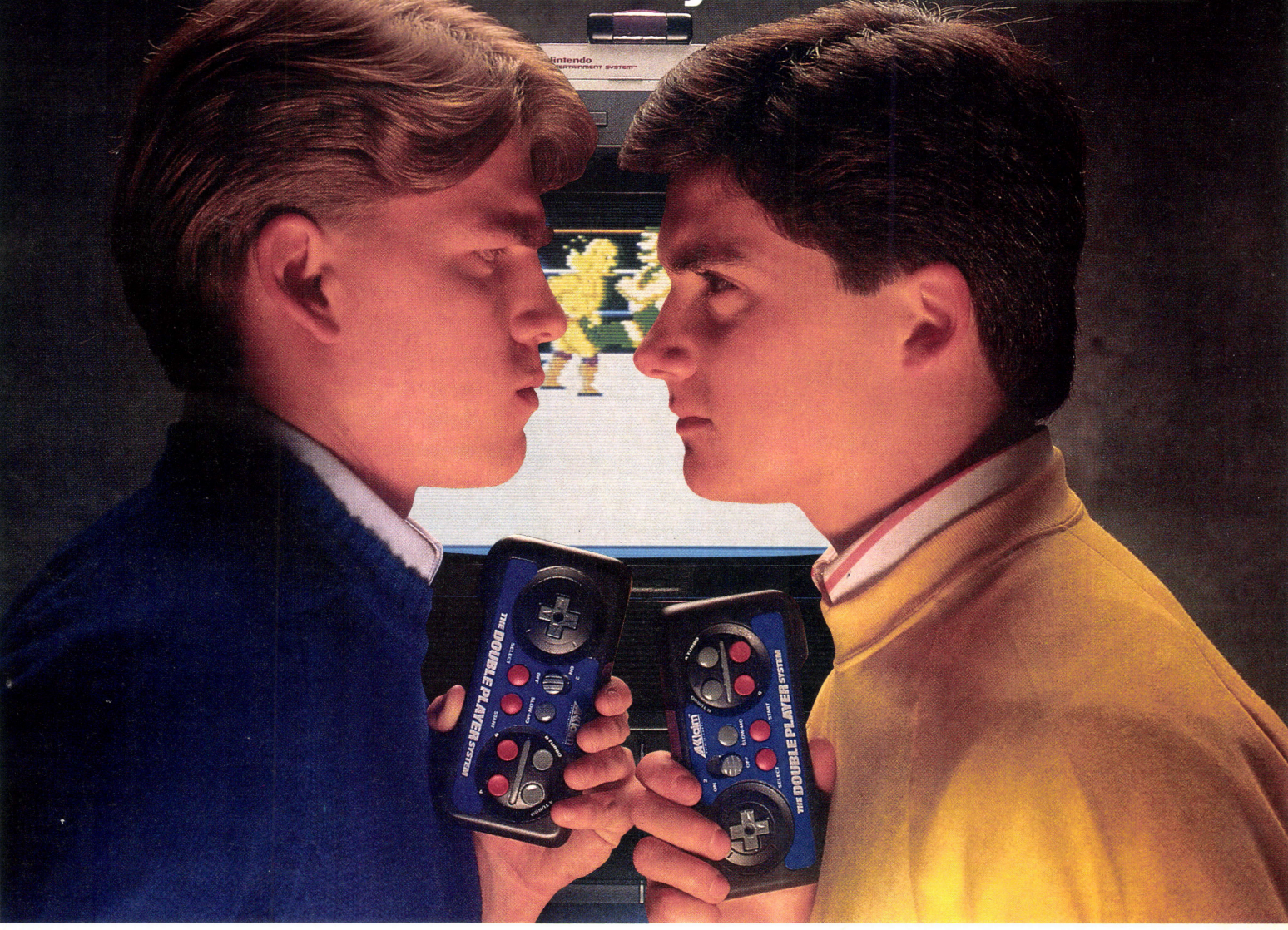

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CIRCLE #104 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

Enjoy Hudson

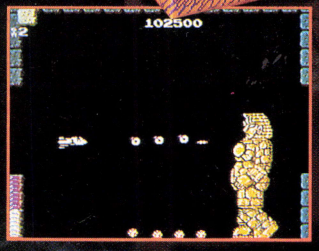
TAKE NO PRISONERS!

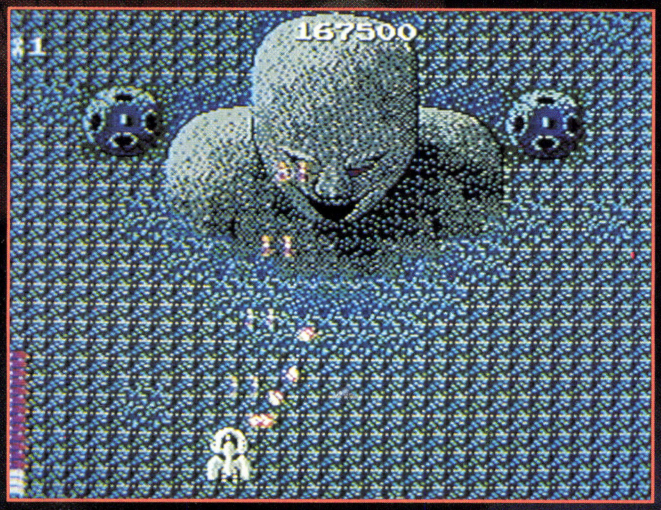
Those are your orders, Captain. It's a fight to the finish in the wildest SHOOTING game this side of Saturn: STARSHIP HECTOR.

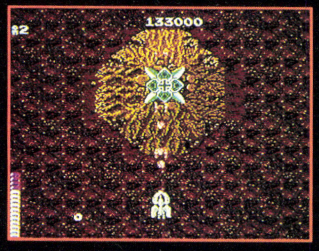
If zapping bad guys is what you do best, then this is your game. But watch out. 'Cause these dudes aren't just bad, they're BAD! A bunch of gruesome, Bio-Mechanical mutants who have devastated earth. So hold on to your joystick! To save the planet, you've got to blast these goons into cosmic dust!

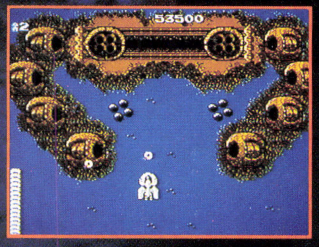
STARSHIP HECTOR is the ultimate challenge to your shooting skills. There's even a 2 and 5 minute competition mode, plus a furious interchange between vertical and horizontal battle zones.

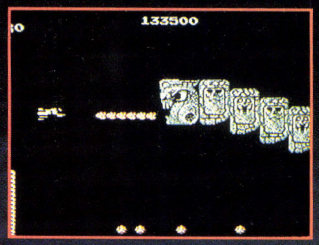
But remember. Take NO prisoners. Look for STARSHIP HECTOR today. And happy hunting!











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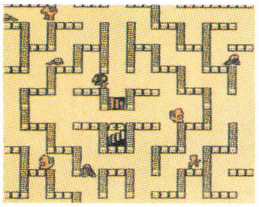
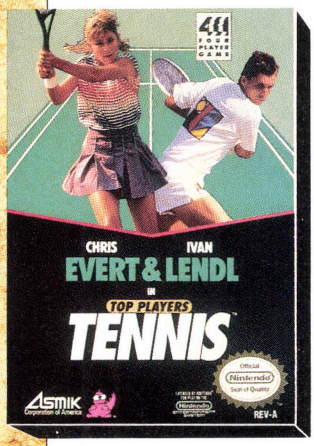
CIRCLE #105 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

Boomer's Adventures in Asmik World is the story of a last-chance warrior who battles an evil warlord and his army of mutant guards.





We'll take you to the ultimate sports challenge in 1, 2, 3 or 4 player games with EVERT and LENDL'S TOP PLAYERS TENNIS.

FACE

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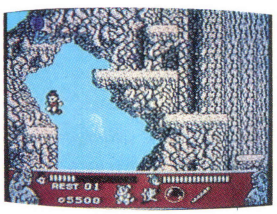
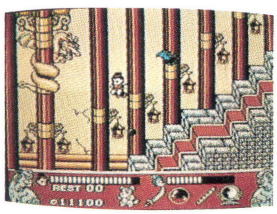
ME

Presenting four new games by Asmik that will take you to worlds where adventure and challenge is not just an option, it's the law.

If you're tired of fighting the same small enemies, then return to the throne at the Crystal Palace. There you will find the evil Zaras in control. Zaras is the toughest, meanest enemy you will face on the NES. Zaras will prevail unless you, with the help of your dog Zap, master the ancient skills of Crystal Palace and discover the secrets in the epic action adventure—Conquest of the Crystal Palace.

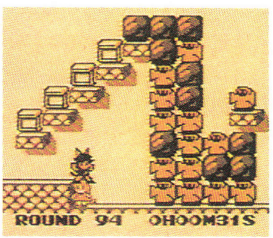


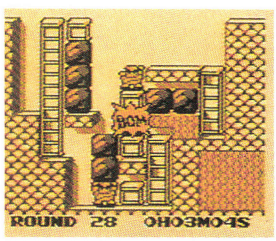


If these games aren't exactly up your alley, then there's Catrap, a unique labyrinth of complicated mazes and monsters that seems to go on forever. And if you manage to solve Catrap's puzzle, amaze your friends by designing your very own mazes for the labyrinth.

So, if you think you have the guts to play with us, then you know what you have to do.

Face me.





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CIRCLE #106 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

PEN PALS NEEDED

Dear VG&CE:

Many thanks for your great mag! It has been a lifeline here in South Africa. We don't always get information, especially as there are limited amounts of magazines entering the country.

We in South Africa have about 75,000 game machines that have been bought in the past three years—Nintendo, Sega and Famicom are freely available—but most storylines for games are in Japanese, so your magazines are ideal. We have about 800 different games, and we have been using your maps to translate some of the games for the members of our club.

This club is multiracial and multicultural. We would love any mail, information and inquiries from anybody and think a pen-pal club is a fantastic idea.

—Michael Van Etteryk
P.O. Box 2759
Randburg, Johannesburg,
South Africa 2157

It's good to hear from fellow video gamers in other countries, Michael. Thanks for writing.

Judging by the volume of mail that we receive, I'm sure that you'll soon start getting lots of letters from our readers. This cultural exchange will soon have your club loaded up with information from this side of the globe. Video games—and its participants—seem to cross all boundaries.

HANDHELD QUERIES

Dear VG&CE:

I would like to say thanks for making a great magazine!

I have a few questions. In the article titled "NEC Gets Handheld Game Player" (*News Bits*, VG&CE September 1990), it says the TurboExpress is capable of displaying up to 512 on-screen colors simultaneously. Isn't it 256 out of 512?

Is it true that Atari is planning to make another Lynx that is less expensive, but not as good as the current Atari Lynx? I am planning to get a Lynx, since it is such a great handheld game machine, but if it is true about Atari making the Lynx 2, will it stop making the present Lynx?

—Stephan Suhocki
Mendham, New Jersey

The specifications for the TurboGrafx-16, and therefore the TurboExpress, have been somewhat confused. In fact, our article in the August issue comparing the Genesis and TG-16 with 16-bit computers listed simultaneous-color output at 256 out of 512. We have since discovered that the TG-16 is able to display all 512 colors at once (though a handful of the colors are "transparent," and, therefore, not visible to the player).

Regarding Atari creating a new model of the Lynx, it's been rumored for quite a while, but Atari spokesmen have said it's too early to comment on it. This isn't a denial that the redesigned product exists, but often a company will create prototypes of a device, assess its marketability, then scrap the plans to bring it out. A good example of this is the NES-compatible color portable that BDL has built. Though it's been rumored to be ready for release, a BDL spokesman said that Nintendo still hasn't granted a license for the product's release. With that in mind and in view of Nintendo's push on the Game Boy, which BDL's machine would conflict with marketing-wise, it doesn't look like BDL's handheld will ever see the light of a store shelf.

For these reasons, we won't report on a new Lynx until we've gotten confirmation that the product exists and will be released.

HARDWARE WARS

Dear VG&CE:

In your review comparing the Commodore Amiga (blech!) and the Atari ST to the NEC TurboGrafx-16 and Sega Genesis, you left out some factors about the ST. The most important thing you left out was the sound. With the addition of a product called the Tweety Board, the ST has three-channel stereo sound, and the new STe boasts digital six-channel stereo!

Also, current titles by Sierra (i.e.: *Leisure Suit Larry 2*) use the MIDI port to deliver superb sound. And with the addition of the JRI 4096 board to the ST or standard on the STe, you can have a palette of 4,096 colors. The newest addition to the ST family, the 32-bit TT, boasts a palette of over 200,000 colors.

—Kevin Mazzone
Liverpool, New York

Dear VG&CE:

I am writing this letter in response to the extremely biased and uninformed article "Genesis and TurboGrafx-16 Take on the 16-Bit Computers" in the August 1990 issue of VG&CE. Mr. Eva obviously knows nothing about the Amiga or the computer market in general. Perhaps the Amiga is a "niche" market in the com-

Letters to be considered for publication should be addressed to *Reader Mail*, VG&CE, 9171 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 300, Beverly Hills, CA 90210. Letters may be edited for style, clarity and space considerations. We regret that we cannot respond to all mail received.

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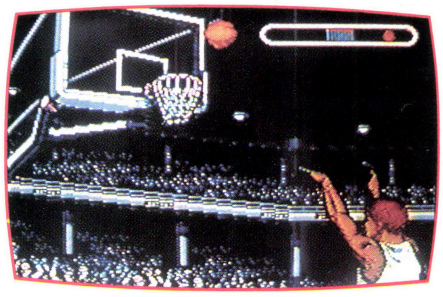
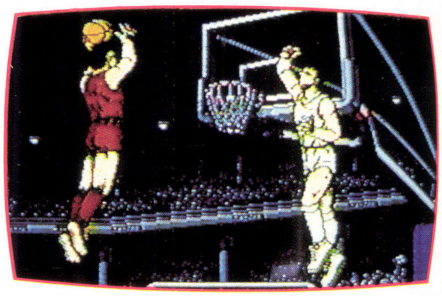


Be a part of the action–not just a spectator



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You control full court movement

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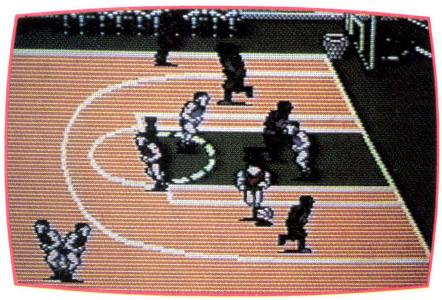
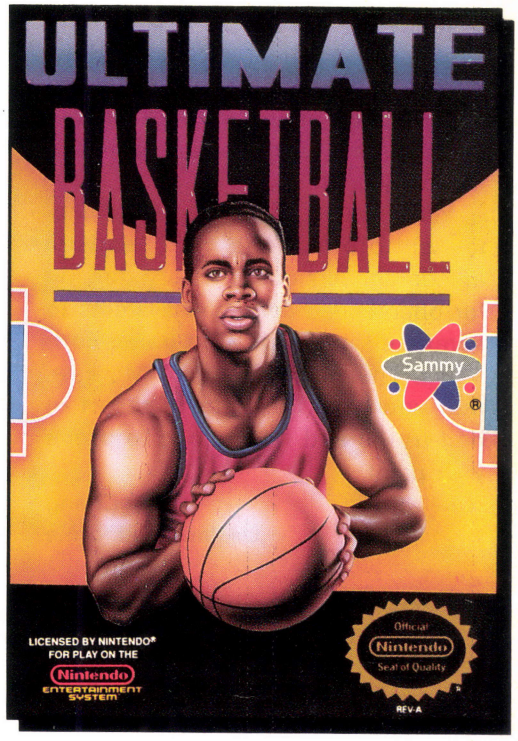


Team up with a friend against the computer



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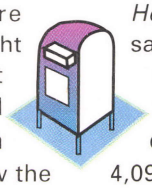
CIRCLE #107 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

puter industry, but with over a million Amiga owners, it currently has a larger installed user base and more than ten times as much entertainment software as the Genesis. The weaknesses of IBM conversions for 16-bit computers is utterly inconsequential. A brief look at any Amiga mail order listing reveals that more than 90% of Amiga games are developed on the Amiga or the ST first! Those games that are converted from the IBM to the Amiga are almost never arcade games.

So what if neither Commodore or Atari produce their own software? Are we really "at the mercy of third-party software publishers"? Since when do any original programs come from big corporations? *SimCity* and *Populous*, two of the most successful game programs in recent history, were developed by independents. Might I also add that *SimCity* came out on the Amiga before the IBM and that *Populous* was written first on the Amiga. Furthermore, it is now the Amiga, not the ST as Mr. Eva states, that is the most popular computer in Europe. The ST is third, behind IBM!



I could go on and on. I know people within game producing companies. I could tell you how head programmers and artists of major game producers detest writing for game consoles, how the very graphics on those same game consoles are drawn on the IBM and Amiga. I believe, however, that I have made my point.

Yes, I readily agree that the Genesis will produce the most realistic arcade conversions. It's very difficult for open-ended computer systems to compete with dedicated game consoles. That doesn't mean, Mr. Eva, that you have the right to resort to half-truths and falsehoods to prove your point.

—Steve Chang
Oakland, California

Dear VG&CE:

I am writing in response to your article about consoles vs. 16-bit computers in the August 1990 issue. I own an Amiga and a Genesis and have a friend who owns an ST and a TG-16, so I have seen all four machines and am not biased toward any of them.

First of all, the article didn't hesitate to include the TG-16's 256-color mode, though up to now there hasn't been a single game written for that mode.

Secondly, you left out many of the Amiga's graphics resolutions and color modes. The article stated that games are written using 320 x 200 resolution. Anybody who owns an Amiga knows that this is not true. The Amiga has programmable resolutions, meaning that you can have any graphics resolution from 640 x 400 down; *Sword of Sodan* is a good example.

The article also stated that the Amiga's overscan mode is not used in games. I admit that overscan mode is now widely used, but there are some games that take advantage of it, including *Unreal*, *Crystal Quest* and *Heart of the Dragon*. Mr. Eva also said that Amiga games are written using 32 colors on-screen, but he failed to mention the Amiga's 64-color (half-bright) mode and 4,096-color (HAM) mode. There are games that utilize these modes including *Menace* (64 colors), *Beast* (128 colors) and *Pioneer Plague* (4,096 colors), to name just a few.

—Korbie Ntiforo
Albuquerque, New Mexico

Frank Eva responds: First of all, no add-on has any relevance in an article that attempts to speak from the basic hardware level. For example, the Tweety Board and JRI board for the ST are add-ons, not part of the ST hardware. The same case exists with the use of the MIDI ports, which required additional hardware. Also, the STe and TT weren't available at the time the article was written.

With regard to the Amiga arguments: Games that use expanded palettes are the exception, not the rule. In fact, some Amiga 1000s aren't even capable of displaying Extra Half Bright graphics! Finally, Heart of the Dragon*, which uses HAM (Hold and Modify) graphics, wasn't available at the time the article was first written.*

Having IBM translations for the Amiga is not inconsequential, since, to a large extent, Amiga owners can expect that most domestic software will begin its life on an IBM. Granted, much software in the UK is geared more toward 68000 computers, and my article stated that in different terms. The problem with the vast majority of UK software is that it is hastily produced, and budgets are very low. Consequently, material comparable to that being produced for Genesis and TG-16 is subpar.

Lastly, its obvious to me that 90% of Amiga game software has not *been produced first on the Amiga. A very large portion began on the ST; another large chunk began on the IBM; and a recently growing batch was actually developed on the Amiga.*

WHY IS IT SO GOOD?

Dear VG&CE:

If the Neo•Geo has the same processor as the Genesis, how can the Neo•Geo have better graphics and sound? it can't be the arcade software because you could then put Neo•Geo software on the Genesis.

—Aaron Brennan
SCRF12C on Prodigy

The basic answer to your question is that the systems' graphics and sound capabilities aren't a function of the main processor. Each game console has support chips that provide the quantity of colors that can be displayed simultaneously, the number of channels of sound (and type) that can be output and how many sprites can be put on the screen at once, as well as many other specifications.

CORRECTIONS AND ADDITIONS

• In the October issue of VG&CE, in the *Video-Game Companies Address Book*, we inadvertently printed a then incorrect number for Koei's game-counselor line. The correct phone number is (415) 348-0500.

• We've received information that Game Genie, the device from Galoob Toys that lets you temporarily modify NES-game parameters, is being legally sold over the counter in Canada under the Camerica label. Zellers, K-Mart, Toys "R" Us and Den for Men are among the stores carrying it.

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CIRCLE #104 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

CONTEST WINNER

In the July issue of VIDEOGAMES & COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT, we ran a contest that would let one lucky reader become the owner of a TurboGrafx-16 video-game system, a TurboStick and a slew of TurboChip games. And you've anxiously awaited the results of our drawing.

The lucky winner is...

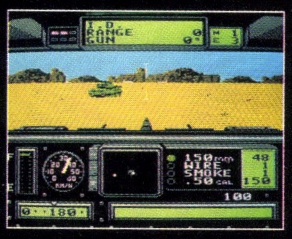
Michael McGinnis of Danville, California.

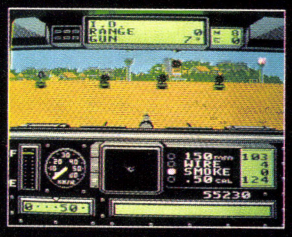
Congratulations, Michael. We hope you enjoy your new game system!

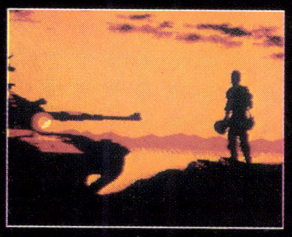
Also, thanks to all the people who sent in cards for the contest. We received thousands and thousands of entries, most of them with complimentary words about how readers enjoy VG&CE. Keep on reading VG&CE—we're going to offer more of these giveaways in the future.

TIME TO BRING OUT THE BIG GUNS.

BATTLETANK™







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CIRCLE #108 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

TIP SHEET

Even the best player has trouble with a game now and again, but where can you turn for help? VIDEOGAMES & COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT has designed *Tip Sheet* to give you, the reader, answers to questions such as "How do I defeat the end boss on this level?" or "I've looked everywhere, but I can't find the blue vase." So if you're having a problem on a game, write to us, and our group of experts will do everything they can to solve it. Send your letters to

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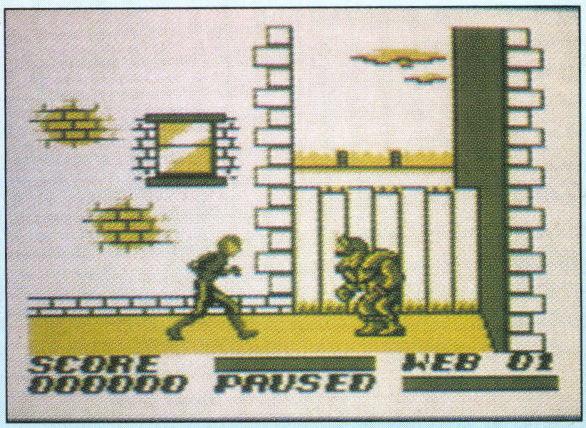
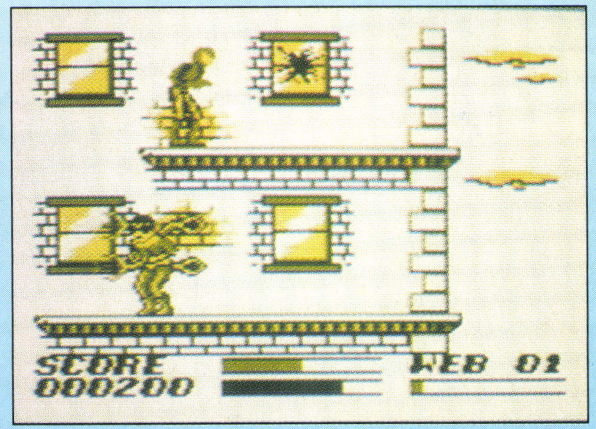
Suite 300
Beverly Hills, CA
90210
Attn: *Tip Sheet*

by Donn Nauert

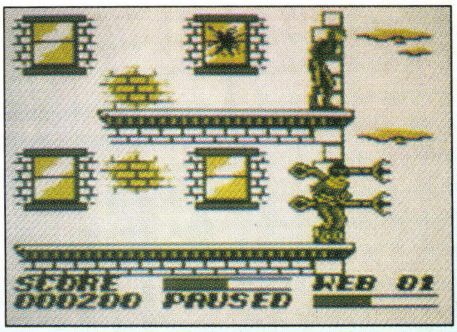




The boss characters in Amazing Spider-Man, such as Dr. Octopus, are extremely diffucult to beat.

I bought a game called the *Amazing Spider-Man*, and I'm having some problems. I find the fourth level easy, but the boss at the end (the Rhino) is so tough that I can't get past him without walking right up to him and punching. By the time I beat him, I have no extra men and have used at least one continue. Is there an easy way to defeat him? I also have the same problem with Dr. Octopus on the fifth level. And I can't even get close to Venom on the sixth level because of his web. Can you help me out?

—Patrick Harrison
Toronto, Ontario, Canada



I've been playing *Amazing Spider-Man* for a while and can't beat the fifth stage boss! Must I waste my lives to get past him?

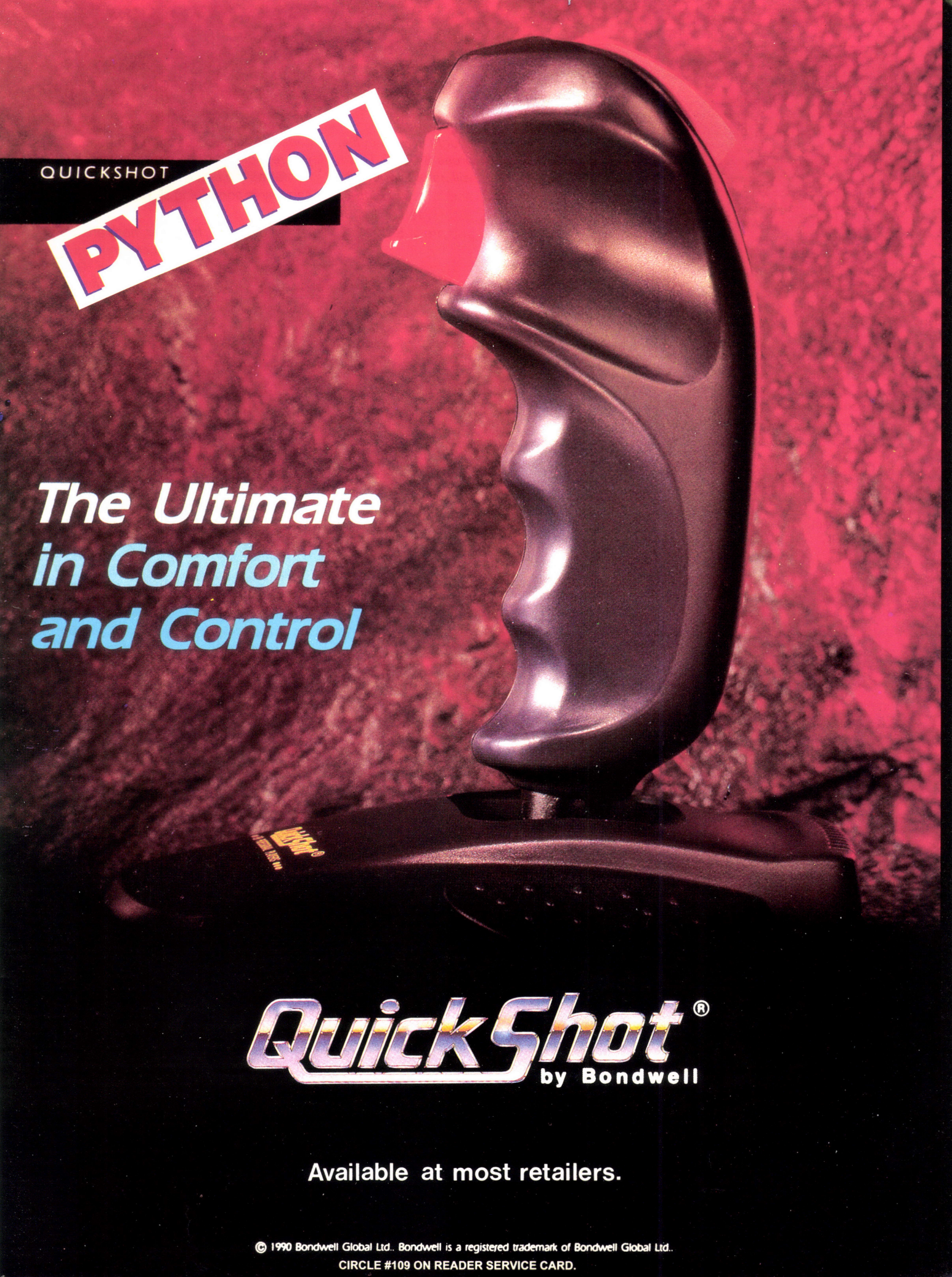
—Masatoshi Enomoto
Miami, Florida

Unfortunately three lives and three continues are all you get to work with in the game, but to get by Rhino you will need to punch him. The web seems to have no effect on him.

As long as he is not moving, you can do a lot of damage to him. You'll want to punch once, then retreat and jump over him as he moves back to the left. When he comes at you again, jump and turn, then punch, repeating this until you have defeated him.

To defeat Dr. Octopus you'll have to use the ledge above the good doctor. Stand at the far right of the ledge to lure him in that direction. Then run back to the left and fall to the lower level, shoot a few webs at him and then jump back on to the ledge above.

Sorry, but we're going to let you handle Venom yourself. Hey, we don't want to give away all of our secrets!



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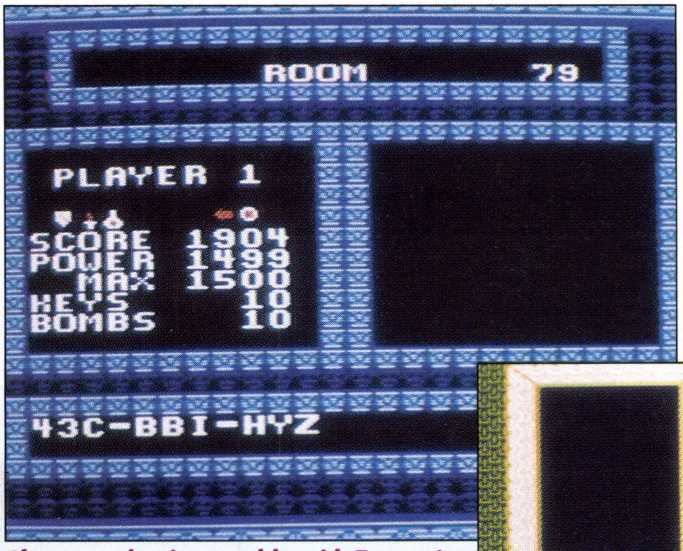
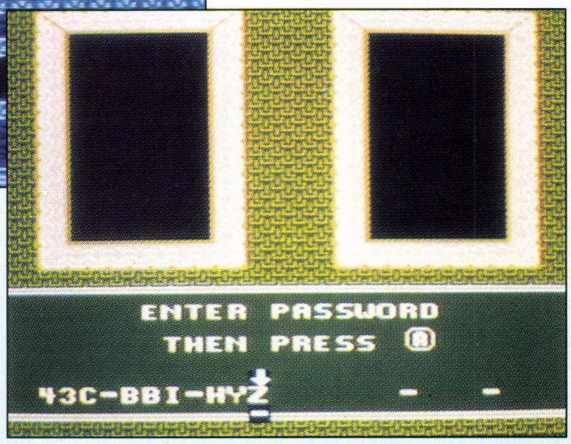




If you are having trouble with Tengen's Gauntlet, starting on Room 79, the passwords we've provided will help you out quite a bit.

I was wondering if you know of any tips on an older game called *Gauntlet*, by Tengen. Are there any passwords or tips that you could give me?

—Erik Smolski
Southington, Connecticut

Here are codes for all four characters. For the Warrior, input 43C-BBI-HZZ*; for Valkyrie, input* 43C-BBI-HYZ*; for the Elf, input* 43C-BBI-HYY; *and for the Wizard, input* 43C-BBI-HZY.

When you reach Room 100, the combination for all four characters is XRTW98Y7*h. This password will start you at Room 79 with full power, ten keys and bombs.*

Here's another hint: If you get caught on a stun tile, press ***START****. This will pause your game and take you to the sub-screen. When you press* ***START*** *again, you will return to the game, but the stun tile will be gone, and you'll then be able to move about freely. The only other tip I can give you is to take your time, and try not to just muscle your way through.*

I was wondering if you could give me help on the CD game *Monster Lair,* for the TurboGrafx-CD. Do you have any hints available?

—Mike Howland
(CFGS43C on Prodigy)

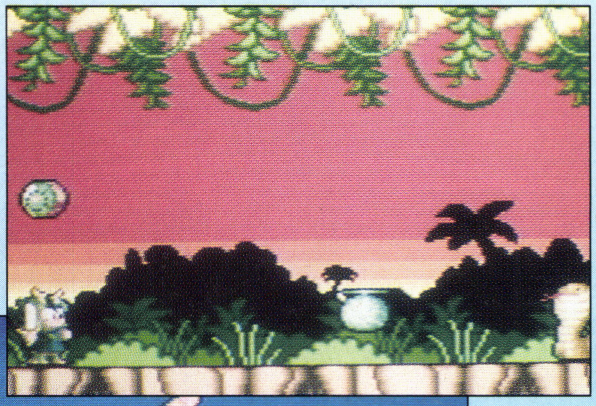
By "hints" I'm not sure if you mean codes to help you through the game or if you're looking for help on a certain level. As far as the latter, about the only thing I can say is something stupid like: Don't get hit.

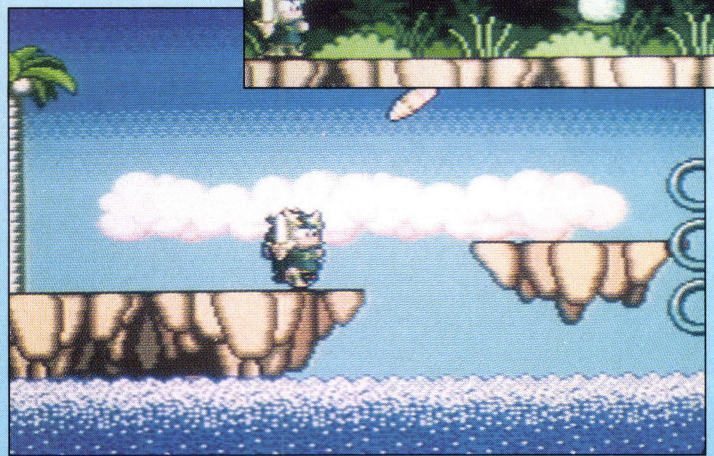
As for codes, however, here are a few that will let you continue as often as you like. When "Game Over" appears on the screen, press L, R, D, U, **SELECT** *and* L, *and you'll continue from the last spot that you died.*

The second continue code requires you to obtain a high enough score that you can enter your initials on the high score table. Once there, hold down **SELECT***, which will let you enter numbers. Input* "68K"*as your initials and start a new game as usual. The only difference is that you'll now be able to continue as often as you want.*

Here are some other tips: For a sound test, simply press the I *and* II *buttons during the title screen. To control both players with one joystick for twice the firepower, start a two-player game as usual then disconnect the TurboTap and insert a single joystick into the TG-16. You'll now have control of both characters.*

There are some neat Easter eggs hidden in NEC's Monster Lair, for the TurboGrafx-16 and TurboGrafx-CD Player, such as these helpful continue codes.





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CIRCLE #110 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

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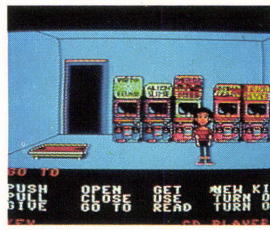
Once you go in, you may never come out!

The weirdest house on the block!

"Dr. Fred should chill out."



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Maniac Mansion is different every time – sometimes scary... sometimes silly... but always a challenge... the kind of a game that will keep you up nights trying to figure it out – or afraid to fall asleep!

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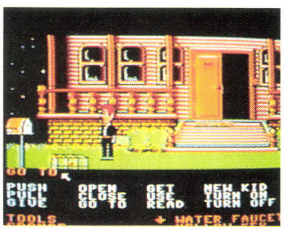
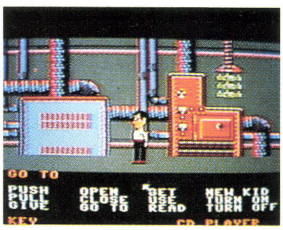
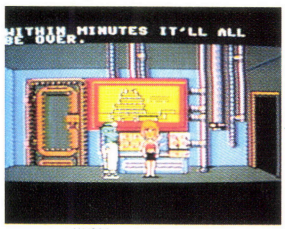
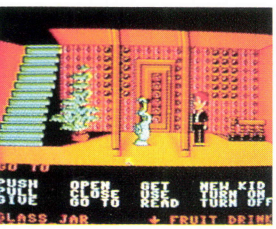

This box is ticking!

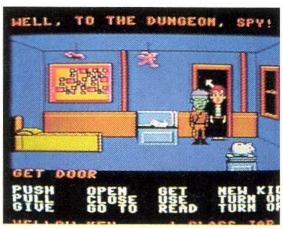

Listen!
A nuclear reactor!



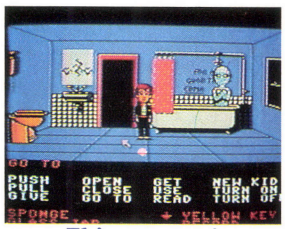
"I'll suck out your brains!"

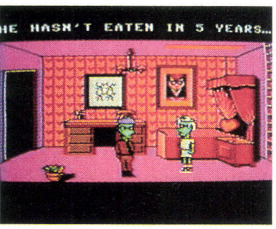

The Tentacle is hungry!

Don't get Weird Ed's hamster mad.

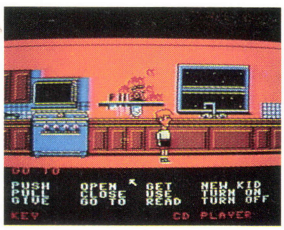


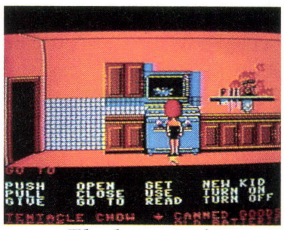
Into the dungeon, Dog Breath!


This mummy is no dummy!



"Nurse Edna, you are U-G-L-Y."


A chainsaw in the kitchen!?


The hamster's in the microwave!!

Look for clues on the film.

The mystery has just begun.

(S1.75 first minute; 90¢ each additional minute.)

Get the official Maniac Mansion Hint Book. Call 1-800-STARWARS

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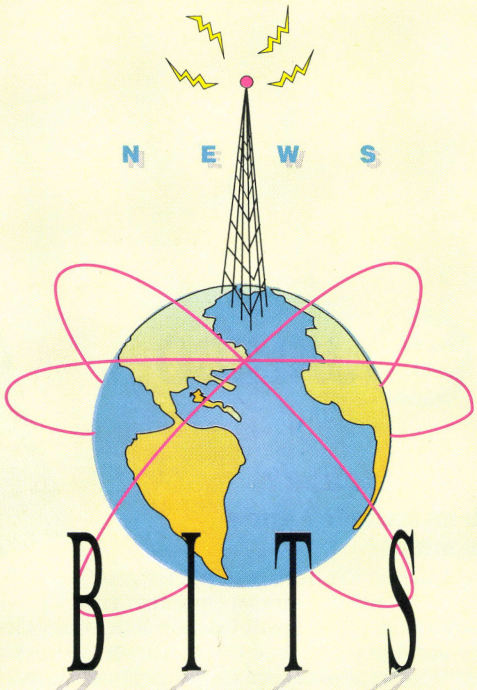
CIRCLE #111 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

COMPILED BY
JOYCE WORLEY



VG&CE's Own Creates Clone

Frank Tetro, Jr., VG&CE's computer-game strategy editor, has put his years of gaming (and his degree in computer science) into use. The long-time editor and game whiz started his own company, Spectre Computers, (Yorktown Heights, New York, [914] 962-1587) for the sale and servicing of PC computers. Now Spectre is building an IBM PC compatible, The Shadow, which delivers a high quality, fully loaded PC clone at reasonable cost.

The Shadow uses only name-brand components. All models include a Samsung 14-inch VGA monitor, Super VGA card, Seagate hard drive, Western Digital Cards, two Toshiba floppy drives, Microsoft or IBM DOS, 101 key AT clicking keyboards with keypad and cursor controls, Intel processors and one megabyte of RAM. There's also a one-year parts and two-year labor warranty.

The Shadow comes in a variety of configurations ranging from 12 MHZ XT with no HD ($1,099) to a 386/33 two-meg RAM with 120 MG HD ($3,699).

Frank explained, "We want to offer a no-hidden-charges type of deal. The price includes everything you'll need." The machines are custom configured to any setup desired. Finally, a salesman is assigned to each customer to give continuing personalized service after the computer is installed.

VG&CE's computer editors tested a 286/12 megahertz system with a 20-megabyte hard drive ($1,499).

Tengen Announces Details of "Rent to Own" Program

Tengen has completed the arrangements for their "rent to own" video-game program. Over 25,000 video-rental stores will carry Tengen's line of video games, playable on NES, Sega Genesis or NEC TurboGrafx-16 systems, along with point-of-purchase posters and information about new product releases. Gamers will be able to rent the games; then when they buy the program, they'll receive a $5 rebate coupon to offset the rental fee.

Tengen's senior vice-president of marketing, Ted Hoff, explained the reasons the company is trying this approach. "It makes sense for us to offer our customers the opportunity to sample our games while also offering the video-rental stores the opportunity to sell Tengen games and tap into a new revenue source." He elaborated, "This is no longer a sellers market....We encourage sampling through video-rental stores."

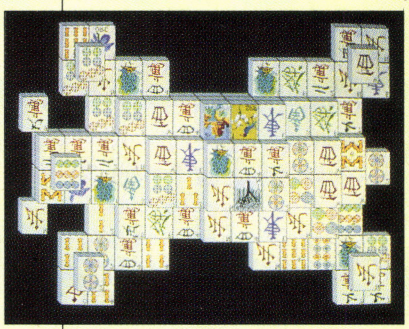
One Stop Hotline

There have been several "hints and clues" hotlines, but most cover the games of only one publisher. Comtec, a leader in the "900" number field, with 28 services in operation, will soon enter the game world with the Video and Computer Games Hotline. Working in conjunction with the International Computer Group and Katz Kunkel Worley, Inc., Comtec says that its new hotline will be a one-stop service for all electronic gamers.

Callers will get both advanced and novice hints for titles from all major video- and computer-game publishers, previews of upcoming hot games and late-breaking news. Also featured are interviews with leading designers that give insights into how to play better. According to Comtec president Steve Lampert, callers can order any of the products described on the service.

World's Most Published Game Gets Sequel

The world's most widely available game is about to get a sequel. Activision's classic game, *Shanghai*, which has been published for more systems than any other game in the world, is the basis of a new contest, *Shanghai II: Dragon's Eye*.



The new game contains all the features of the original, with some new wrinkles. As in the original, players match up pairs of tiles until the board is empty. However, the new program has 12 different layouts, taken from the Chinese calendar, in shapes of a rabbit, ram, snake, ox, rooster, tiger, etc. Each time all tiles are cleared from the board, an animated picture of the animal comes to life.

As players win at *Shanghai II*, they get a chance to play Dragon's Eye, which reverses the procedure. Dragon's Eye challenges players to strategically place tiles on the board for points, instead of removing them.

Cinemaware Courts IBM PC Sales

Cinemaware has a deal for IBM PCers to help them build a gaming library. The company is distributing "buy

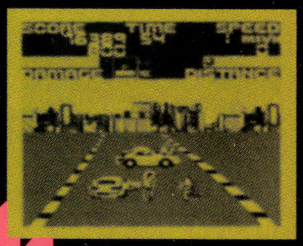
NICE GUYS FINISH BASHED.

When HQ radios you the bad guy's stats, you hit turbo boost and feel your eyes in the back of your head. But don't just follow that car, **bash it.** Or smash it. Just do what it takes to rid the road of the fastest, nastiest thugs alive.

trash-compact their cars. After all, these guys didn't make the Most Wanted on account of a few dozen parking tickets! If you don't stop them in time, they're gone for good. And you're just spinning your wheels. And smelling the rubber.

Think it sounds easy? Think again. Living at 178 m.p.h. is no piece of cake. You've got five missions and hundreds of miles of screaming, twisting, 3D L.A. highways to master, and plenty of innocent drivers to avoid. What's worse, criminals don't stop until you practically

Check your stats and blast off!



Catch him. Book him. And keep him off the road.

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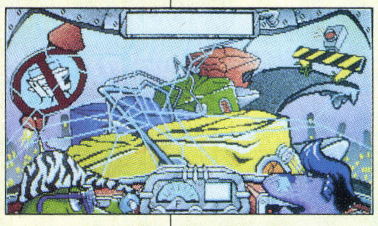
CIRCLE #112 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

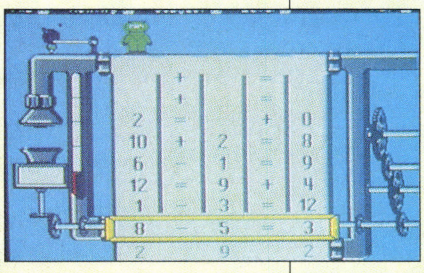
one get one free" coupons in special Cinemaware software packs, including *It Came From the Desert, TV Sports: Basketball* and *Brainblaster* for the IBM PC format. The coupon is also available in Spotlight products and with Kraft joysticks.

Consumers submit the coupon to Cinemaware, with proof of purchase of the first game, to receive another free IBM program. Titles available are *Darkside, Speedball, Total Eclipse, The Krystal, The Three Stooges, Rocket Ranger* and *TV Sports: Football.*

Educational Programs Get Game Boost

Educators all agree that learning can be acquired almost painlessly through game play, and software publishers are taking note of that fact. Davidson & Associates (Torrance, California, [800] 545-7677), has a new version of *Math Blaster Plus* that features a bigger emphasis on games than its previous program. Currently available for IBM PC machines, the company plans to release a Macintosh version during first quarter 1991. The New *Math Blaster Plus* is said to use state-of-the-art sound, animation and graphics.





The new program permits users to input their own problems. It also has a record-keeping feature for teachers. The four games on the disk have been beefed up to make them more entertaining while they tutor. *Rocket Launcher* teaches basic math as kids build a space ship and go into outer space. *Trash Zapper* lets them destroy space trash while answering math equations. *Number Recycler* features problem-solving for gold coins, and the new *Math Blaster Game* lets students control a space craft, dodge debris and gobble space food for bonuses, as they solve math problems.

First Byte also upped the fun content in their new spelling program. *Spell-A-Saurus* uses multicolored graphics and synthesized speech in four word games. *AstroDrive, Zug Escape!, Ptera-Tutor* and *Spell-A-Saur* all feature a time-traveling theme, where children hear the spoken words from spelling lists they (or the parent) put in.

The program can be customized to suit individual needs by list size and case sensitivity, and the animations can be turned on or off. The speech synthesis works with no additional hardware, but it does support Covox, SoundBlaster and ACPA sound accessories. It's available for $44.95 for IBM PC and Macintosh computers.

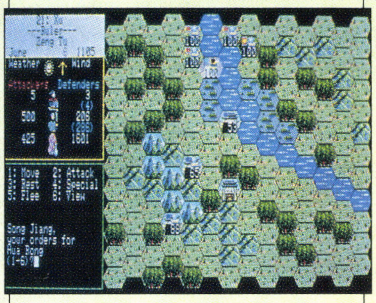
Nintendo Goes to Europe

Nintendo of Japan recently formed a new subsidiary in West Germany. The new company is already selling Nintendo Entertainment Systems, and Game Boy products should be available in Europe soon.

The new subsidiary is under the parent company, Nintendo Company Limited (not under Nintendo of America). The company will be headed by Mr. Shigeru Ota, formerly the director of product planning and development for Nintendo of America.

Video War Game Goes to Computer; AD&D Computer Game Goes to NES

Multisysteming is becoming noticeably more popular in today's gaming climate. The Koei hit NES game *Bandit Kings of Ancient China* is now available for play on IBM PC and Amiga computers. The 12th-century war game casts the player as a bandit king. It features role-playing elements as the player is given attributes including mercy, wisdom, strength, courage and dexterity, which have bearing on the player's ability to fight and lead. The company has also released *Genghis Khan* and *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* for computer play.



Going in the other direction, Fujisankei Communications International (FCI) is poised to release a Nintendo version of *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons: Heroes of the Lance*, to be followed by *AD&D: Pool of Radiance*. Both role-players were originally released by Strategic Simulations, Inc. (SSI), for play on computer.

Activision Announces Game Boy Titles

Activision has unveiled three new programs for the Game Boy. *Heavyweight Championship Boxing* is a one- or two-player action game, with two views. A third-person ring view shows the two boxers as they face off. The first-person-view pictures the opposing boxer in a face-to-face image.

Ghostbusters II uses the plot and music from the hit movie. The player maneuvers two ghostbusters through multiple spook-infected levels until they reach the ultimate showdown.

Malibu Beach Volleyball features men's and women's teams from four countries, each with different strengths and specialized shots. It can be played alone, against another player or two players can team against the computer opponent.

Florida Kids Star in Mario Ad

Nintendo's advertising "Mario Is Back" campaign uses some real computer wizardry. VG&CE went to the source to answer readers' questions about how many people appeared in the ad and came back with some interesting facts.

The film was shot in Florida, where a group of approximately 100 high school students participated in Mario's return. The crowd was swollen into a numberless horde through the magic of computer graphics.

The ad features Mario's face, apparently made up of thousands of gamers, as the camera pans back into space to show Mario superimposed on the United States.

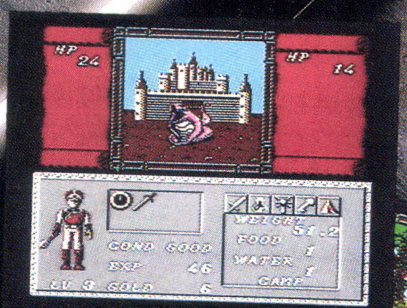
Tiger Puts a Spark in SPARCstation

Tiger Media introduced an entertainment product for Sun Microsystems' SPARCstations, marking the first commercially available entertainment for the workstation. *Airwave Adventure: The Case of the Cautious Condor*, a murder mystery, is a CD-ROM program that runs on SunCD, a peripheral for SPARCstation. Set in the 1930s, the murder takes place aboard a

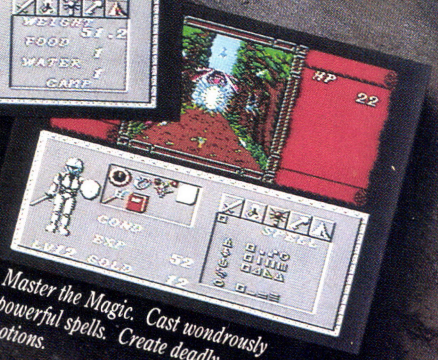
A Game So True-to-Life, You Don't Just Play It. You Live It!

DUNGEON =MAGIC=

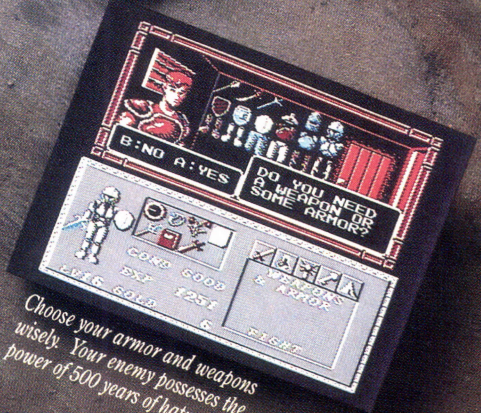
Finally, a fantasy role-playing adventure that makes you a part of the action.



Beware of the serpant's bite. It is deadly. And you are vulnerable.



Master the Magic. Cast wondrously powerful spells. Create deadly potions.



Choose your armor and weapons wisely. Your enemy possesses the power of 500 years of hatred and evil.

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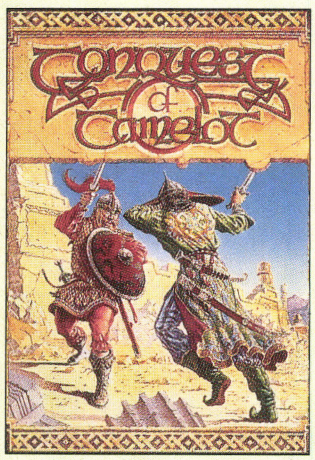
luxury airliner, and the onboard detective-player has to interview characters and gather clues to find the guilty person.

The SPARCstations are professional workstations, and Tiger is the only entertainment software company to develop fun programs for the system. Tiger's president, Laura Buddine, explained that the company had been using the SPARC to develop products for three years, and the response they got from showing the game at a graphics seminar encouraged them to make the program available.

Sierra Makes Scoring Correction in *Camelot*

Christy Marx, designer of Sierra's *Conquests of Camelot: The Search for the Grail*, has announced a correction in the scoring of the

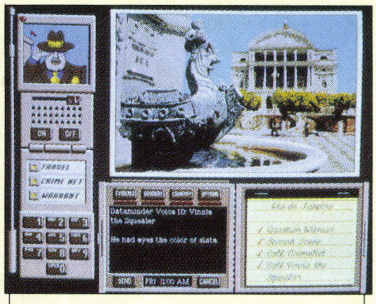


game. *Camelot* lists a possible 368 skill points; however, according to Marx the actual maximum number of skill points is 362. Marx assures us that the wisdom and soul points are correctly shown in the game.

Marx invites players to write to her personally, in care of Sierra, P. O. Box 485, Coarsegold, CA 93614. She's hoping to get some feedback on her game and also to learn what players would like to see in her next project.

Carmen Sandiego to Go Low-Tech

Brøderbund Software has entered into an agreement for Western Publishing Co. to develop a line of nonelectronic items based on *Where in the World Is Carmen San-*



diego? Western plans to introduce the new products at Toy Fair in New York City in February 1991.

Western will unveil a board game, several children's story books, activity books and puzzles based on Carmen and her heisting cohorts. Each is designed to promote geography literacy.

Brøderbund's *Carmen Sandiego* line of software (*Where in the World, Where in the USA, Where in Europe* and *Where in Time Is Carmen Sandiego*) has sold almost two million copies since the first game appeared in 1985.

Capcom Serves Games With Domino's Pizza & Cornnuts

Capcom USA is using good taste to promote its line of NES games. The company will launch promotions with Domino's Pizza and Cornnuts, Inc., to give snackers a chance to save on games.

The Domino's Pizza promotion is scheduled for February 1991. Participants can complete a mail-in certificate from the pizza box top and send it in for a $5 discount on Capcom's *Yo! Noid* NES cartridge.

The Cornnuts promotion started October 1990 and runs through April 1991. Participants can mail in a certificate from the package of Cornnuts for a special price on *Mega Man 2*.

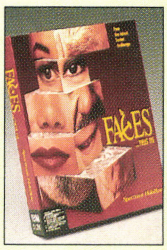
Clue Book Available for *Silver Blades*

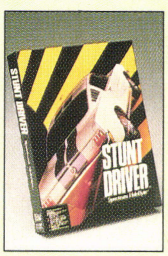
Strategic Simulations, Inc., has released a clue book that goes with *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons: Secret of the Silver Blades*. The player's guide contains maps of every major location in the game and descriptions and locations of major encounters. Also listed are the locations and descriptions of magical treasures and a checklist so you won't miss anything. It includes such tactics for play as how to defeat foes and which combinations of characters are most successful.

The clue book sells for $12.95 and is available at retail outlets or from Electronic Arts ([800] 245-4525).

Spectrum Holobyte Sponsors Sweepstakes

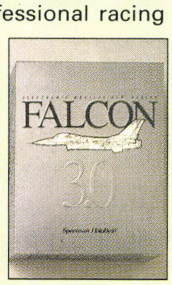
Spectrum Holobyte's sweepstakes drawing in support of three of their game lines will send three winners on fantasy trips. Entrants must be age 18 or over. Entry forms with contest rules can be found at software stores or in specially marked





Spectrum Holobyte game boxes. Entrants complete the form and indicate which of the trips they would prefer.

One winner will attend a three-day course in professional racing at the Jim Russell Racing Driver School, at Laguna Seca Raceway, Salinas, California. The winner will drive a Formula Ford during the course. The course is part of a week for two in California.



A second winner will go to a half-day class in aerial dogfighting at the Air Combat USA school in Fullerton, California. The seven-day trip for two includes passes to Disneyland.

The third grand-prize winner will get a ten-day trip for two to the Soviet Union, where he or she will meet Alexey "*Tetris*" Pajitnov and visit Kiev, Leningrad and Moscow.

The contest is to promote three game series: *Stunt Driver* and *Vette!*; *Falcon 3.0* and *Flight of the Intruder*; *Welltris* and *Faces*.

GEnie Cuts Prices

The GEnie online service just introduced a flat subscription rate of $4.95 per month for unlimited, nonprime time access to over 100 of their services. The new pricing structure lets users pay a monthly rate for unlimited access to basic services, which include news and information services and travel, education, hobby and entertainment departments. There are over 100 basic services covered under the new flat rate. The company has also eliminated the $29.95 sign-up fee, so that the only cost for subscribing is the monthly rate of $4.95 (in the USA; $5.95 in Canada).

Services not covered under the basic rate include personal-computing bulletin boards, software libraries, financial services, chat lines and real-time conferences, which are billed at $6 per hour in the U.S. ($8 in Canada), a reduction of $4 per hour from the current 2400 baud non-prime time rate. Prime time rate remains at $18 per hour in the U.S. ($25 for Canada).

GEnie is part of the GE Information Services, a division of General Electric Company ([800] 638-9636).

Top Coin-Ops of August 1990

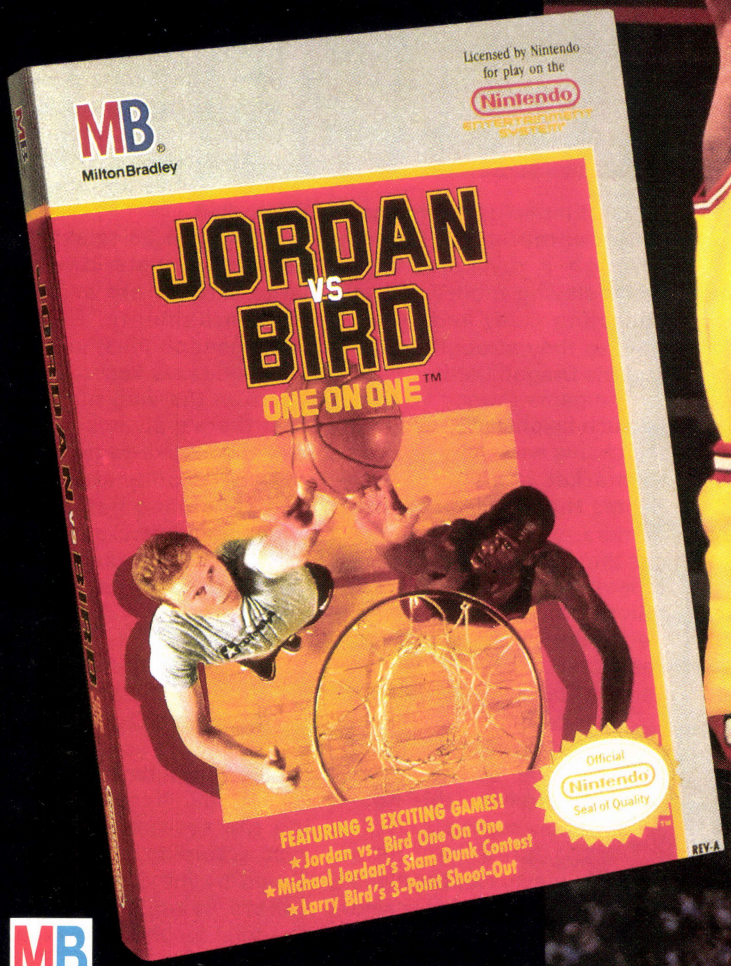
Figures courtesy of *RePlay* magazine, based on an earnings-opinion poll of arcade operators.

Best Upright Videos

1. *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* by Konami

JORDAN VS. BIRD

ONE ON ONE™



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INCLUDES THESE THREE GAMES:

- JORDAN VS. BIRD ONE ON ONE
- MICHAEL JORDAN'S SLAM DUNK CONTEST
- LARRY BIRD'S 3 POINT SHOOT OUT

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2. *Hard Drivin'* by Atari
3. *G-LOC* by Sega
4. *Smash TV* by Williams
5. *Galaxy Force* by Sega
6. *Mercs* by Capcom
7. *Final Lap* by Atari
8. *World Soccer Finals* by Leland
9. *Off Road* by Leland
10. *Beast Busters* by SNK

Best Coin-Op Software

1. *Final Fight* by Capcom
2. *Combatribes* by American Technos
3. *Cadash* by Taito
4. *Neo•Geo* by SNK
5. *WWF Superstars* by Technos
6. *MVP* by Sega
7. *Aliens* by Konami
8. *Hydra* by Atari
9. *Off Road Trak Pak* by Leland
10. *Thunder Jaws* by Atari

Best New Uprights

1. *Top Landing* by Taito
2. *Gate Of Doom* by Data East
3. *Thunder Fox* by Taito

Sega Has No-Cost Cure for TV Woes

Sega, quick to find a cure for TV/Genesis mismatches, has a no-cost solution for anyone with the problem. According to a company spokesman, the first Genesis machines produced were incompatible with one model of Magnavox TV and a Zenith model, both now out of production. Sega corrected the problem so that new Genesis machines don't have the mismatch.

However, anyone who has this problem should telephone Sega's customer-assistance line at (800) USA-SEGA. They'll arrange for a quick, no-charge fix.

Arcades Replace Coins With Mag-Stripe

It will probably be a long time before all coin-op machines stop snatching quarters. But at least some arcades are replacing the coin-slots with mag-stripe mechanisms. The Fun-Pass System, created by Recreation Technologies, Inc., has been tested in amusement parks for up to two years, but it's still a new phenomenon in most play-for-pay palaces.

The players use a credit card or currency to purchase a paper magnetic-striped card encoded for the amount they wish to spend. This is then swiped through the slots on machine readers attached to each game.

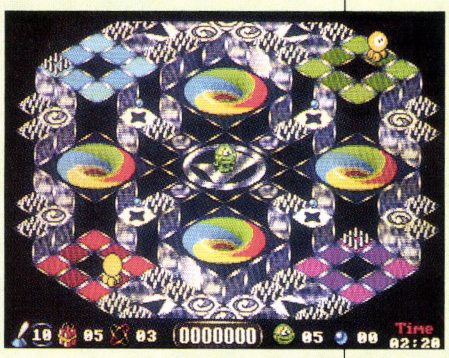
The new system carries more benefits than just lightening the weight in a player's pocket. It makes possible different price levels for different quality games, time-programmed price changes and infinitely variable price settings (instead of multiple quarters.)

From the operator's standpoint, it gets rid of the coin-box jams, break-in risks and makes data collection a snap.

Innerprise Offers *Globulus* Challenge

Innerprise Software has a challenge for arcade aces. The company is sponsoring a contest for the first ten *Globulus* players who complete the game's 25 levels.

The first prize is a Caribbean cruise for two. The second winner will get a five-day trip to visit Innerprise Software (Hunt Valley, Maryland), or $500 cash. The next eight winners will receive the entire Innerprise catalog of games and then will continue to receive the software company's new releases for the next two years.



Contest details are packed with the game.

Dragon Warrior Becomes Animated Cartoon

The popular Japanese role-playing game *Dragon Warrior* is now an animated nationally syndicated cartoon show. The TV show will echo the plot of the hit game. A party of intrepid adventurers must complete a quest through a mythical land while slaying monsters and collecting clues and weapons, as they struggle to defeat the Dragon Lord.

The game *Dragon Warrior* hit such heights in Japan that merchants were only allowed to market it on Sundays. Seems that eager Japanese gamers were so anxious to get the cartridge, they'd cut school to buy it. Enix Corporation brought *Dragon Warrior* to the United States last year in an English language version for play on the Nintendo. *Dragon Warrior II* will be on retailer's shelves for purchase this holiday season.

Enix can help players through the game, which is said to take up to 120 hours to complete. An order form in the instruction manual offers a map for $2 (postage charges), but does not mention that a strategy guide is available. However, Enix will include the guide free of charge, to everyone who sends for the map.

Wizardrome Opens; Features Video Games

The latest wrinkle in play-for-pay is Wizardrome, a video-game room located in the Jamestown Village shopping Center, Tustin, California. Billed as a family fun center, it's run by Dave and Debra Scott and their two sons, Cy and Chris.

Wizardrome has Genesis, Nintendo, TurboGrafx-16, Mega Drive, Game Boy and SuperGrafx games available for play on the spot or for home rental, and new releases are constantly being added to the game library. Gamers pay $7 per hour ($4 for a half hour) to play any of the games on the spot; the price even allows them to change games and/or systems during the playing time. The Scotts provide accessories at no additional charge, including controllers, U-Force, Power Glove and the NES Power Pad.

There are 28 televisions used as play-stations, and large screens are available for tournaments. Gamers wear headphones, so gaming sounds are kept to a minimum in the well-run store. And there's always a Scott on hand to give game tips.

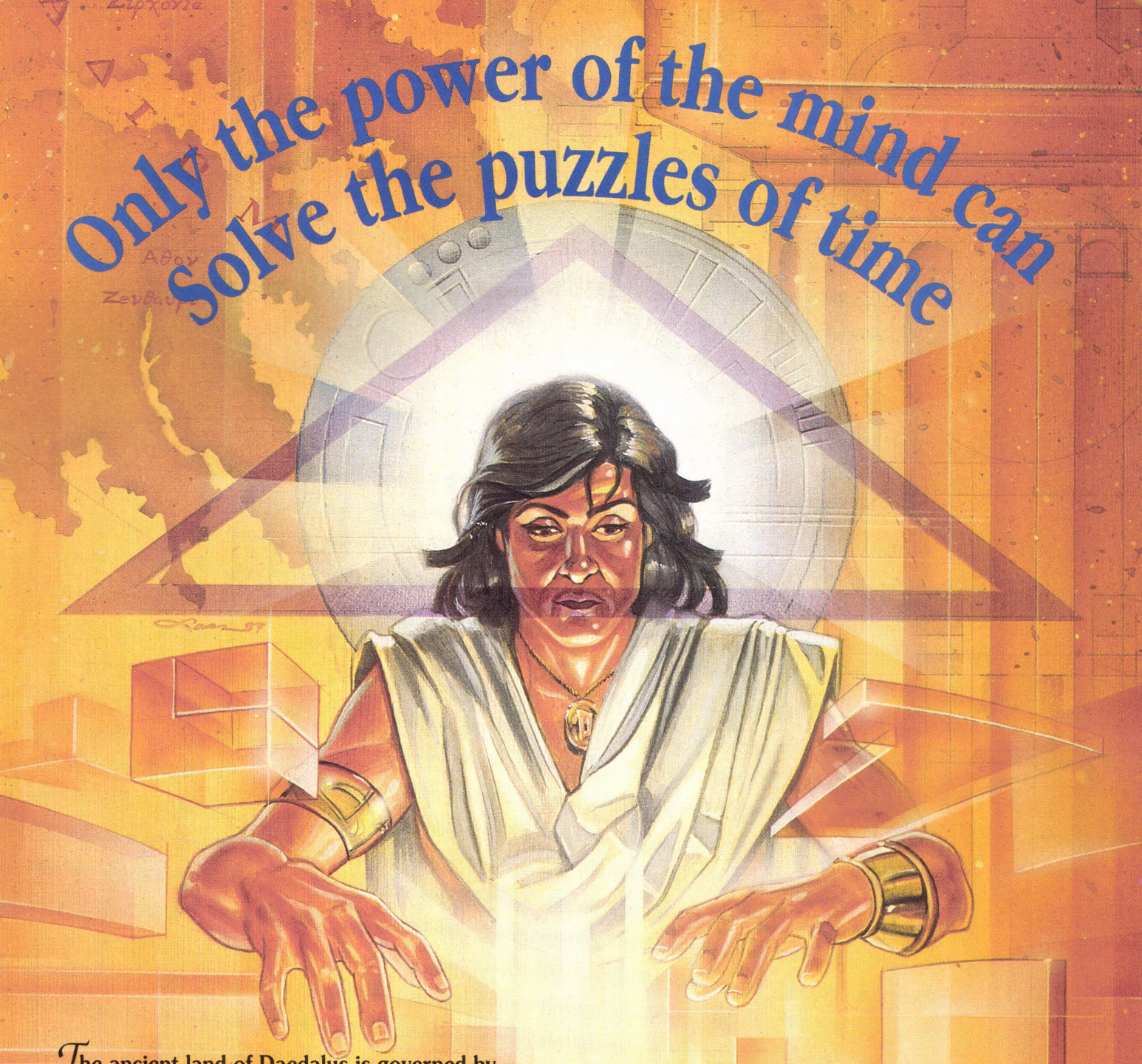
Wizardrome also buys and sells used games and systems and stocks a supply of gaming magazines, so users can keep up to date on what's new.

Computer-Game Sales Soar in Second Quarter

Pop the champagne corks! Computer-game sales rose a sparkling 36.1% during the second quarter of 1990 according to figures released by the Software Publishers Association (SPA). The total for the three-month period April-June was $73.1 million, compared to $53.7 million for the corresponding quarter of 1989. This is the first time since 1988 that entertainment registered a bigger quarterly sales jump than the computer-software business as a whole.

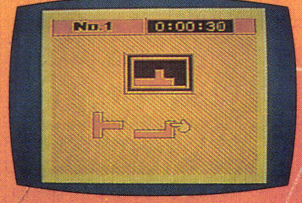
IBM PC game sales exploded, leaping over 80% to $50.4 million. Macintosh entertainment nearly doubled to $3.1 million. The continued decline in 8-bit computer gaming, down 16.5% in the second quarter, meant little in the midst of the general improvement in the market.

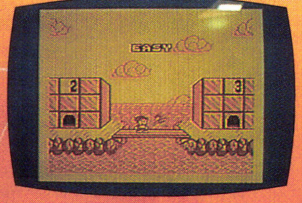
Only the power of the mind can Solve the puzzles of time



The ancient land of Daedalus is governed by symmetry and time. It is a land, where your progress will be severely tested by the challenge of myriad shapes and blocks. It will take the art of Daedalus and the power of your mind to solve the confounding riddles of the blocks. To master Daedalian Opus™ is to achieve the art of victory.

Daedalian Opus™ (dĭ-dā´lē·ən ō´pəs)





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YOU CAN'T STAY IN THE DARK FOREVER...

LightBoy,™ there's no better way to see the light.

LightBoy™ is a unique accessory designed to be used with **Game Boy**®. It is a lightweight, compact instrument which unfolds to fit directly onto **Game Boy**®, allowing you to view the screen with light through a magnifying glass. As an added bonus, Vic Tokai is including a shoulder/waist carrying case with the purchase of a **LightBoy**™. This case can house both the **LightBoy**™ and the **Game Boy**® together. It also has compartments which hold up to four **Game Boy**® game paks.

LightBoy™ for use with NINTENDO® Game Boy®

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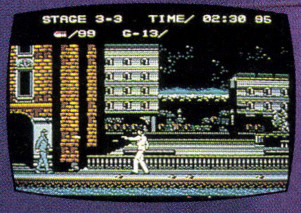
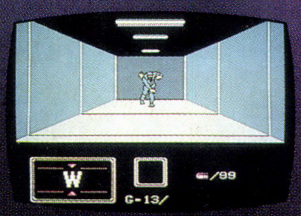
An encore performance!





Golgo 13 is back in The Mafat Conspiracy! Top Secret Episode knocked the wind out of you; this one will blow you away!

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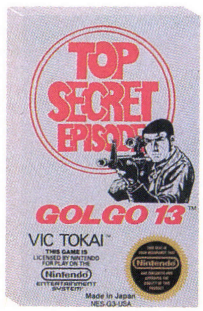
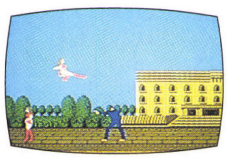
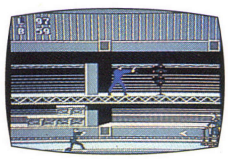
VIC TOKAI Revue!

Golgo 13™

Air wolves and iron tanks? Hey, this dude eats heavy metal for breakfast. The man likes to pack a custom M-16, but his karate kicks to the chops are just as deadly. He's anybody's agent if the price is right; and he's everybody's worst nightmare. **Golgo 13™** is the secret code for action. Air combat anyone? **Golgo 13™** takes you right up the tailpipes of bellowing bombers, right through the little choppers, and right around screaming interceptors. Whether it's crunching karate combat, tense underwater tank warfare, or the sizzling laser fights in the best mazes in video, **Golgo 13™** means action. In fact, there's so much action that you'll probably wear down the B-button.



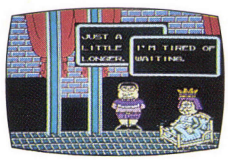


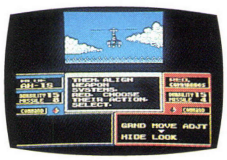


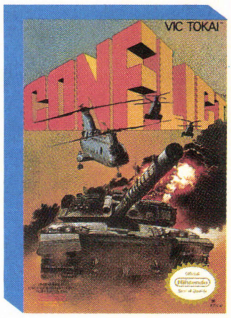
Kid Kool™

In a realm that might have been, in a time that could have been long ago, or just tomorrow, a good king lies dying. The enemies of the north are massing for an attack on his kingdom.

The good king's sorceror has been searching for magic and out of desperation pulls a rockin' rebel from the eighties back in time. **Kid Kool™** is sent on a quest to help retrieve the seven wonder herbs, the only hope to save the king.





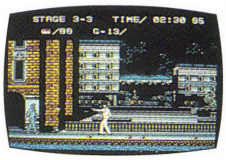


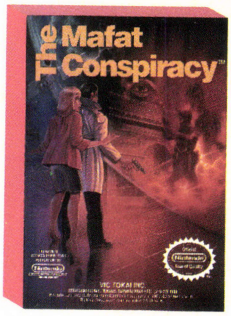
Conflict™

At the break of dawn, the eerie sounds of heavily-laden tanks pierce the morning calm. The metallic reflection in the distance only proves that the sun is bright, but who is it?

Are these tanks the armored support you called for, or has the red machine broken through? There is little time to react. Should you wait till your men are in range, or should you attack them now?

As Commander-in Chief, you've got no time to waste.





The Mafat Conspiracy™

A "StarWars" satellite has been snatched out of earth orbit, the inventor of satellite capture technology has disappeared, the C.I.A. and the K.G.B. are blaming each other, and the world edges toward nuclear oblivion.

Golgo 13 is back just in time. **The Mafat Conspiracy™** is a phantasmagora of action and interaction. Your eyeballs will stretch from their sockets as you speed through Europe in Golgo's Ferrari. Your bones will rattle as you leap across the cars on the Orient Express. And if you think you've seen bad dudes, wait till you feel the power of Duke Togo's wicked karate kick.

The Mafat Conspiracy™ is for those who demand the very best in video games. See it at World of Nintendo, and we'll prove it to you!

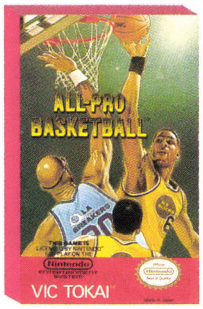
All-Pro Basketball™

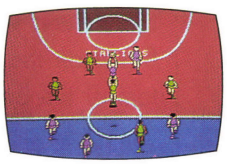
Bored with simple-minded one-on-one basketball? Disappointed that only three men on your team can dribble down court? In a foul mood because the guy who made the basketball game you bought seems to be using hockey rules?

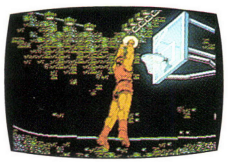
If you're a die-hard gym rat who can play the game, and expect your competition to be the same way, then it's time to play ball because **All-Pro Basketball™** has arrived.

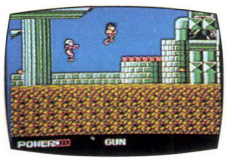
All-Pro is true all-court Five-On-Five basketball complete with long-range jumpers, in-your-face stuffs, passes, steals, rebounds, fouls, and even a half-time show.

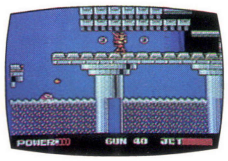
If you're new to basketball, buy the other games. But if you're a real basketball junkie, leave that weak stuff on your home court, and let's get down to the pro game.

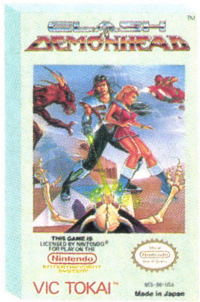












Clash at Demonhead™

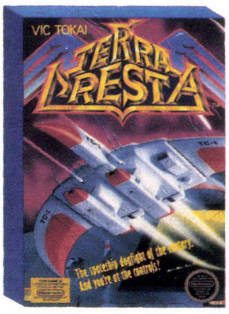
Professor Plum and his designs for the dreaded, death-dealing doomsday device, Dead End, are in the clutches of the diabolical Lawbreakers–a sinister society dedicated to the destruction of mankind. It's only a matter of time before the Dead End Device is assembled and the final countdown to global Armageddon begins.

As Sgt. Billy "Big Bang" Blitz–the youngest and gutsiest commando of the Special Assault Brigade for Real Emergencies (S.A.B.R.E)–your mission is to foil the Lawbreakers' insidious plot. To accomplish your mission, you must find the shortest route to the summit of Demonhead Mountain, where the poor professor is being held prisoner. Rescue the professor, and you save the world from total destruction. But if you should fail. . .

Terra Cresta™

Bored with action on earth? Sick of hohumming it around the neighborhood? Need some excitement in your life?

Take off into space with **Terra Cresta™**. You'll be hurled in to space and thrown into a fight with the evil forces of darkness. Only you can break through the enemy's treachery and beat Mandora, the Supreme Commander of the evil that awaits.



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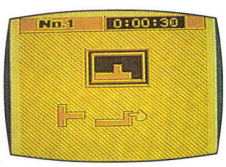

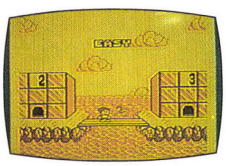

Daedalian Opus™

The ancient land of Daedalus is governed by symmetry and time. It is a land, where your progress will be severely tested by the challenge of myriad shapes and blocks. It will take the art of Daedalus and the power of your mind to solve the confounding riddles of the blocks. To be beaten is ordinary, to achieve victory is an art.

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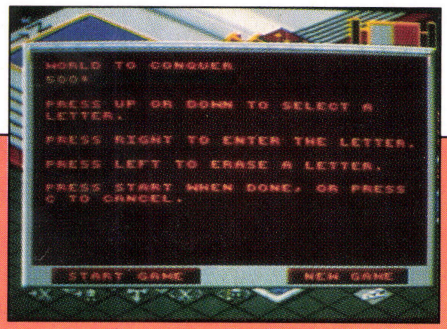
CIRCLE #118 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

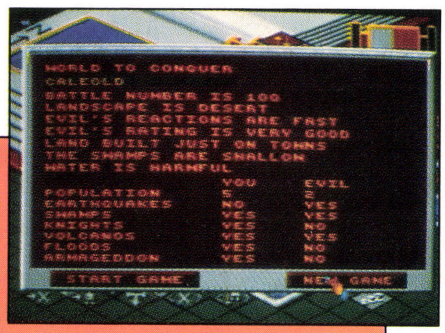
Tips are graded on a scale of one to five joysticks. The more joysticks that are colored in, the more valuable the hint.

Blow the dust off those old games, and try out some of our new hints! If you have some great hints and tips for us, just put them on a piece of paper, and send them to **VG&CE, 9171 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 300, Beverly Hills, CA 90210, ATTN: Easter Egg Hunt.** *The author of each new tip we use will receive $10. Write neatly and be sure to include your name and address!*

Here's a key to the abbreviations:

U = Up
D = Down
L = Left
R = Right
A = "A" button
B = "B" button
C = "C" button





POPULOUS

(ELECTRONIC ARTS FOR THE GENESIS)

Mike Fritch, of Gresham, Oregon, has discovered a stage select for this complicated game. First, go to the "New Game" screen, then hold down A and B and you will be able to scroll through numbers instead of letters. Simply enter the stage number you want to play and press **START**. Great find, Mike.

SUPER HYDLIDE

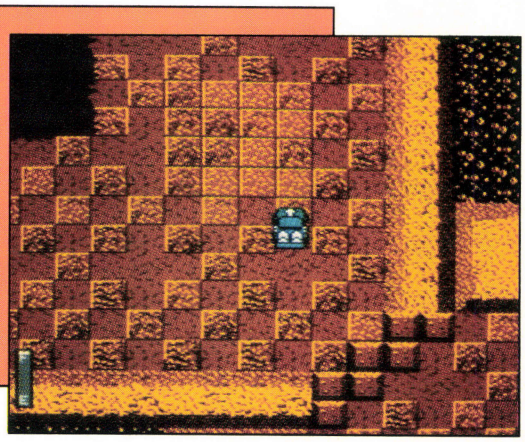
(SEISMIC FOR THE GENESIS)

In the City of the Woods, go to the screen with the pond in it. Stand on the left side at the bottom of the bridge. Use any coin, then search the ground, and you will receive 30 experience points. Keep doing this until you have enough experience to advance a level. Go to the monastery and gain another level. This way you can gain several levels before you leave town. Thanks to Jason Roberts of Shelby Township, Michigan, who sent in this helpful *Easter Egg*.

Mad Max

(MINDSCAPE FOR THE NES)

Matthew Dohn, of Baldwin, New York, has sent in a code that will allow you to skip the car adventure and start in the arena. To do this, simply enter the password **MMAX**.



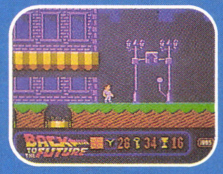
continued on page 41

BACK TO THE FUTURE PART II & III™

TWO EXCITING MISSIONS IN ONE INCREDIBLE GAME!

NOW... IT'S YOUR TURN!

Get Ready for a wild romp through time. Your Challenge: a double mission to save the past, present and future. Here's your chance to teach Biff Tannen a thing or two for stealing your Sports Almanac. It's nonstop excitement, from high-speed hover boarding in the year 2015, to gun slinging mayhem in the wild west. Get "Back to the Future" now--and save the world--before it's too late.



LJN LTD.

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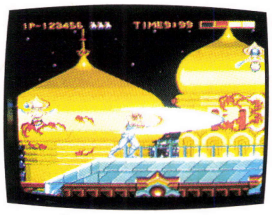
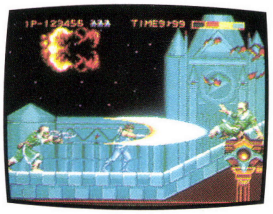
GENESIS™ DO

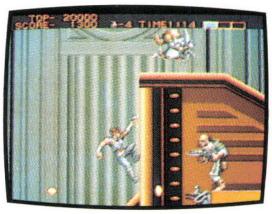
THE FIRST AND ONL



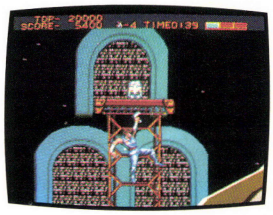
1. Hang gliding deep into enemy territory is just the start. Past these gleaming turrets lie frozen wastes, mechanical jungles and gigantic battleships.



2. Beware of the burly machine gunners. Unleash your laser sword. Watch for the special item to get a super sword.



3. Use your grappling hook to clamber up vertical walls, while fierce guards attack without mercy.



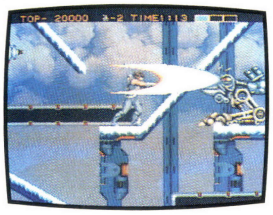
4. On the top of a building, climb rickety scaffolding to build your stamina. Also collect a mechanical attack bird here.

5. Collect two drones and then you get the white mechanical panther to help in your assault, as he leaps at the moon.

ES STRIDER.

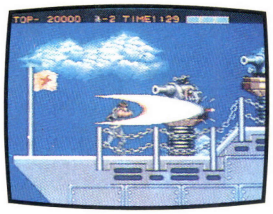
8-MEG GAME EVER.

6. Mad wolves lunge at you from deep in the arctic wastes. Here you can get a friendly droid to help you battle the enemy.

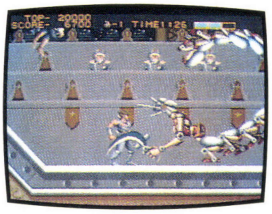


7. In the midst of angled scaffolding, mechanized defenders rock on ball bearings as they try to blast you into atoms.

8. Within the forest you fling yourself onto swinging vines and meet Amazon women. Don't fall—deadly piranha fish infest the waters below.



9. Automatic cannon fire assaults you aboard the fleet cruiser of the evil empire. Soon you'll face its largest cannon—it's awesome.



10. You must face and defeat such mechanical minions of death, before you reach the inner sanctum of Number One.

It's here. Strider—the most powerful home video game ever. The ultimate arcade hit. From hard hitting non-stop action to the awesome graphics and radical gameplay. Strider is definitely here!

An evil Syndicate has violently overthrown Russia and is using their scientific and military might to take control of the world. You land your hang glider in an industrial town and begin your quest to defeat the evil mastermind. You use your incredible acrobatic skills as you leap onto moving platforms, climb to the top of I-beams with your grappling hook and slide with heels dug in down steep slopes while you evade razor sharp spokes.

With your only weapons, a trusty laser sword and swift hover craft, you take on mutant centipedes, ancient dinosaurs, pirates, mad dogs, monkey-like mechanical robots and finally the evil mastermind in his mechano-skeletal headquarters.

It's what happens when 8-meg power combines with the only true 16-bit system. Only on Genesis by Sega.™

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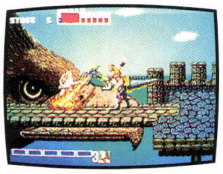
CIRCLE #119 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

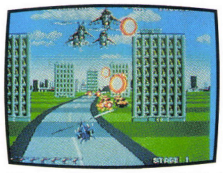
GENESIS DOES IT ALL.

ARCADE GAMES:


Golden Axe™

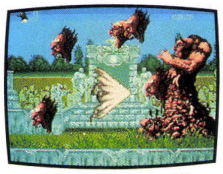
Space Harrier II™

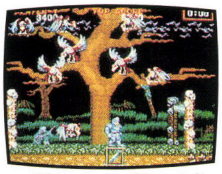
Super Hang-On™

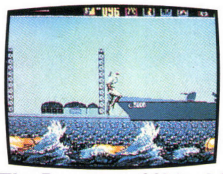

Super Thunder Blade™

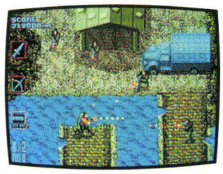
Cyberball™

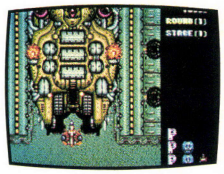
Strider™


Altered Beast™


Ghouls 'n Ghosts™


The Revenge of Shinobi™


Rambo III®


Truxton™

Forgotten Worlds™

MUSIC VIDEO:

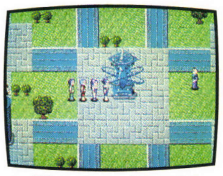
ADVENTURE GAMES:

Super Monaco GP™

E-S.W.A.T.
City Under Siege™

Afterburner II™

Michael Jackson's
Moonwalker™

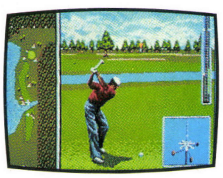

Phantasy Star II™

The Sword
of Vermillion™

SPORTS GAMES:

Tommy Lasorda
Baseball™

World Championship
Soccer™

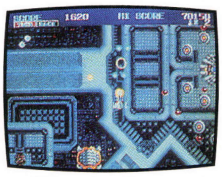

Arnold Palmer
Tournament Golf™

Pat Riley's
Basketball™

James "Buster" Douglas
Knockout Boxing™

Joe Montana Football™

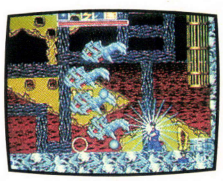
ACTION GAMES:


Thunder Force II™

Ghostbusters II™

Alex Kidd:
Enchanted Castle™

Last Battle™


Mystic Defender™

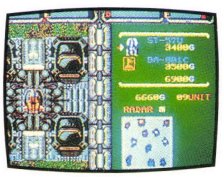
Dynamite Duke™

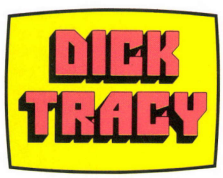
STRATEGY/PUZZLE GAMES:

COMING SOON:

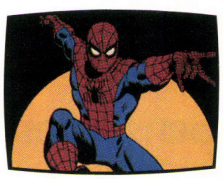
Zoom!™

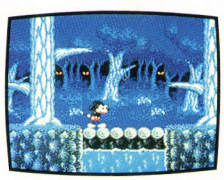
Columns™


Herzog Zwei™



Dick Tracy®


Spider-Man®*


The Castle of Illusion™
Starring Mickey Mouse

SEGA™
GENESIS™

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CIRCLE #120 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

continued from page 36

Dragon Spirit

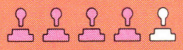
(NEC FOR THE TG-16)

To receive 100 continues, during the title screen press D, R, **SELECT**, D, II, D, I, L, **SELECT**, U, I, II, I then press **RUN**.

PSYCHOSIS

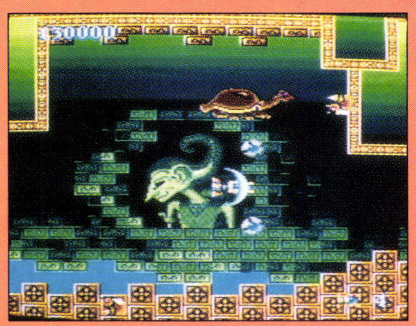
(NEC FOR THE TG-16)

During the title screen, press and hold I, II and **SELECT**, then press **RUN** to bring up a sound-test screen.



To start on the second level, which is more difficult, press and hold U, **SELECT**, I and II then hit **RUN** during the title screen.

There are two special characters that can be found in the game. Butterflies will fly around as you meet the first end boss. To make them appear, you must save the worm at the beginning of the stage by shooting the two enemies that attack it. Be sure not to kill the worm.

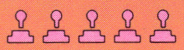


The second special character will appear in Stage 4. If you can make it there without dying, a big turtle will appear. This turtle will hover over your ship and destroy any enemy that comes near. (You can die if you run into the walls, however.)

Drop Off

(NEC FOR THE TG-16)

During the title screen press the **SELECT** button 16 times then press **RUN.** This will bring up a level select. To chose a level, press the **SELECT** button.



To get unlimited continues, during the title screen press I and **RUN** together, then press II and **RUN** together.

To get the sound test for *Drop Off*, during the title screen, press and hold II, then press **SELECT**.

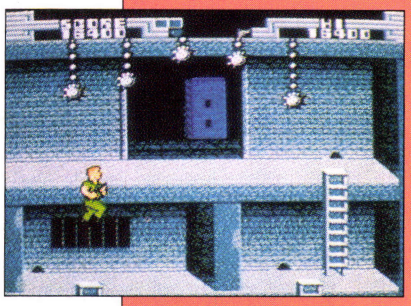
TOTAL RECALL

(ACCLAIM FOR THE NES)

There are many hidden 1-Ups and life capsules in this game, and we'll reveal a bunch to you so you can get through this sci-fi adventure easier.

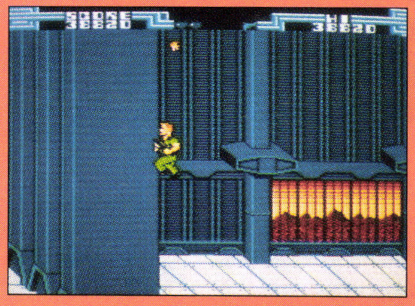
• The first one can be found in the theater. If you watch the credits long enough, you'll notice that you now have three extra men instead of two.

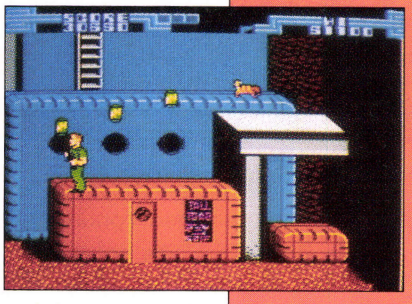
• In any alley that's comprised of only one screen, there's a hidden health to the left of the stairs at the right side of the screen.



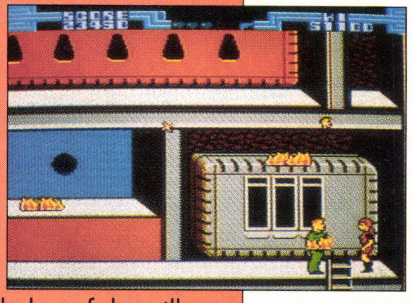
• In the third stage (the cement factory), there is a short cut you can take after you have defeated the end boss. When you're at the second set of chained wheels, push down to jump through the floor (see the photo for the exact location).

• Once on Mars, climb the first column in the second room and then jump to the left. You'll find a hidden extra man.





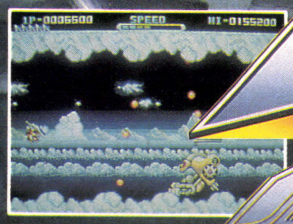
• In the city on Mars, walk to the far left of the first orange building to find three extra health capsules. There's also an extra man hidden later in this stage. When you reach the second girl throwing fire bombs, go to the far top right and jump through the floor.

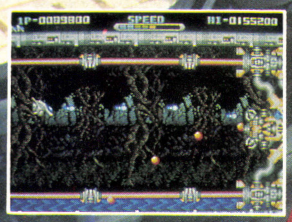


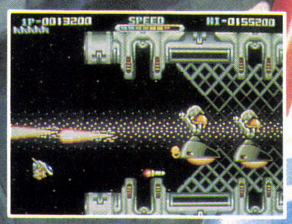
• When you reach the underground mine, in the section where you can find the killer frogs, if you jump through the ledges you can find extra health capsules and one extra man.

• Throughout the entire last stage, you can frequently find extra health hidden in the pillars. You'll need to jump on the ledge of the pillars, then hold down and jump to find them.

WHIP RUSH







In the 22nd century, Earth Defense Headquarters detected a huge unidentified object approaching our system. A probe revealed three of our own Alpha-type robot spaceships at its core. In the hands of a hostile alien intelligence, the ships had been transformed into a gigantic, heavily-armed, flying fortress – bent on destroying Earth! The defenses of Earth have all failed to halt the juggernaut. In a final desperate bid for survival, all resources have been expended to create one mighty jet fighter: Whip Rush. You must pilot Whip Rush on a noble mission to deliver mankind from certain doom!

AVAILABLE IN OCTOBER

RENOVATION PRODUCTS™

RENOVATION PRODUCTS, INC. 987 UNIVERSITY AVENUE, SUITE 10, LOS GATOS, CA 95030

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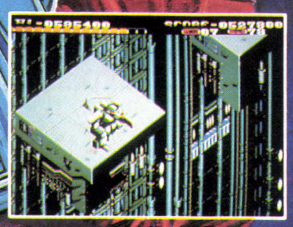
SEGA GENESIS 16-BIT CARTRIDGE



You are about to be transported 100 years in the future, where the latest wave in warfare is the New Age Power-Suit, or NAP – a robotic combat machine which gives the wearer unheard-of fighting ability. Your NAP can be equipped with up to 15 weapon, speed, and maneuverability options, out of 100 available – including flame throwers, land mines, and both hand-held and body-mounted firing equipment. With this kind of firepower to command, your only limitation will be your own strategic sense and combat savvy. The ultimate battlefield – the FINAL ZONE – awaits you!

FINAL ZONE™

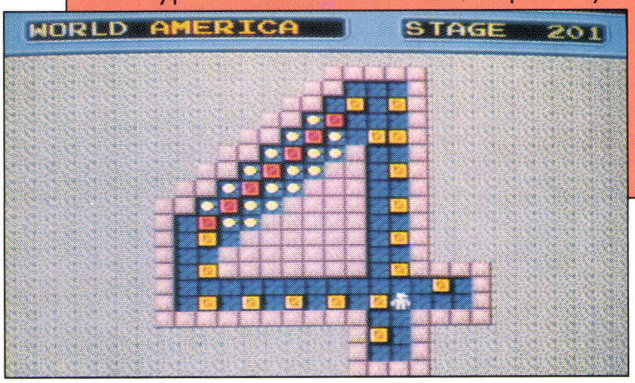
AVAILABLE IN NOVEMBER

CIRCLE #121 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

BOXY BOY

(NEC FOR TG-16)

Here are passwords that will jump you to Stages 201 and 255. Type in **MACKY** and **MICKY,** respectively.



Mendel Palace

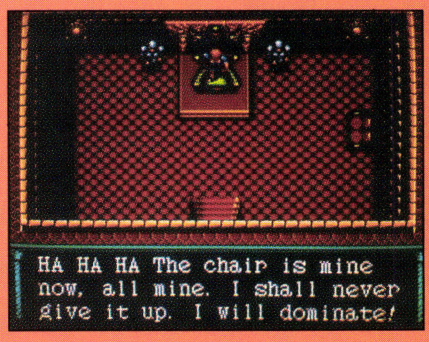
(HUDSON SOFT FOR THE NES)

In *Mendal Palace* you can play through 100 different rounds, but if you press and hold **START** and **SELECT** down at the same time during the title screen then press **RESET**, you'll get to play *Mendal Palace Extra*. This bonus game will provide you an extra 100 rounds of play.

DUNGEON EXPLORER

(NEC FOR THE TG-16)

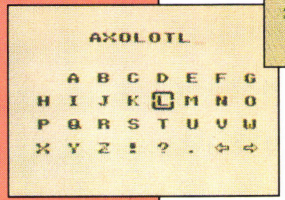
To see a second ending for this game, type in the password **DEBDE DEBDA**, then press I and **RUN** simultaneously. At this point, the game will say this is an invalid code. Then, input a password that will take you to the point were the King turns into Natas and steals the orb such as **AENIP BLKEE** for a Level-14 Fighter. Finally, go sit on the throne.

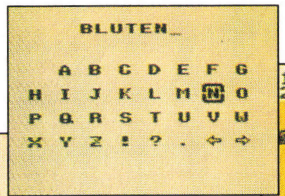


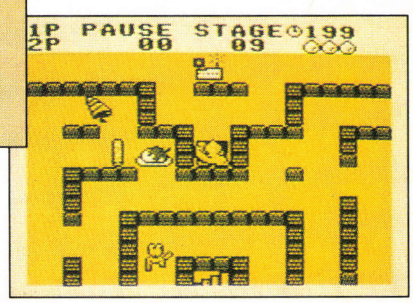
Boomer's Adventure in Asmik World

(ASMIK FOR THE GAME BOY)

Thomas Bennett, of Mission Viejo, California, has a code that will start you at the end boss of either Level 1 or Level 9. For Level 1, input AXOLOTL; for Level 9, input BLUTEN.





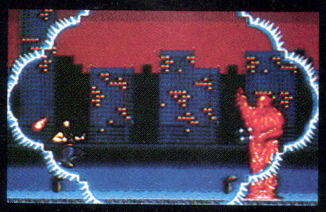


FRESH FROM THE SAGE

SHADOW BLASTERS

SUMMON THE POWER OF HYPRION TO STAND DEFIANT IN THE SHADOW OF EVIL

Experience the supernatural Powers of Warriors from distant times as they roam the planet battling the forces of darkness, the phantoms of Ashura. Hurling the Flames of Justice they seek and destroy the scourge that has befallen the Earth.



INSECTOR X

THEY'RE GONNA BUG YA!...TO DEATH!

Compared to these guys, killer bees are about as scary as a butterfly. In this awesome insect Empire you've got to be a fast gun! No can of bug spray will help you here. These giant mechanized insects mean business. Become too enthralled with the beautiful landscape and your daydream could become a nightmare.

Become . . . Insector X!
A moment's delay could be your last!!!

SAGE'S CREATION

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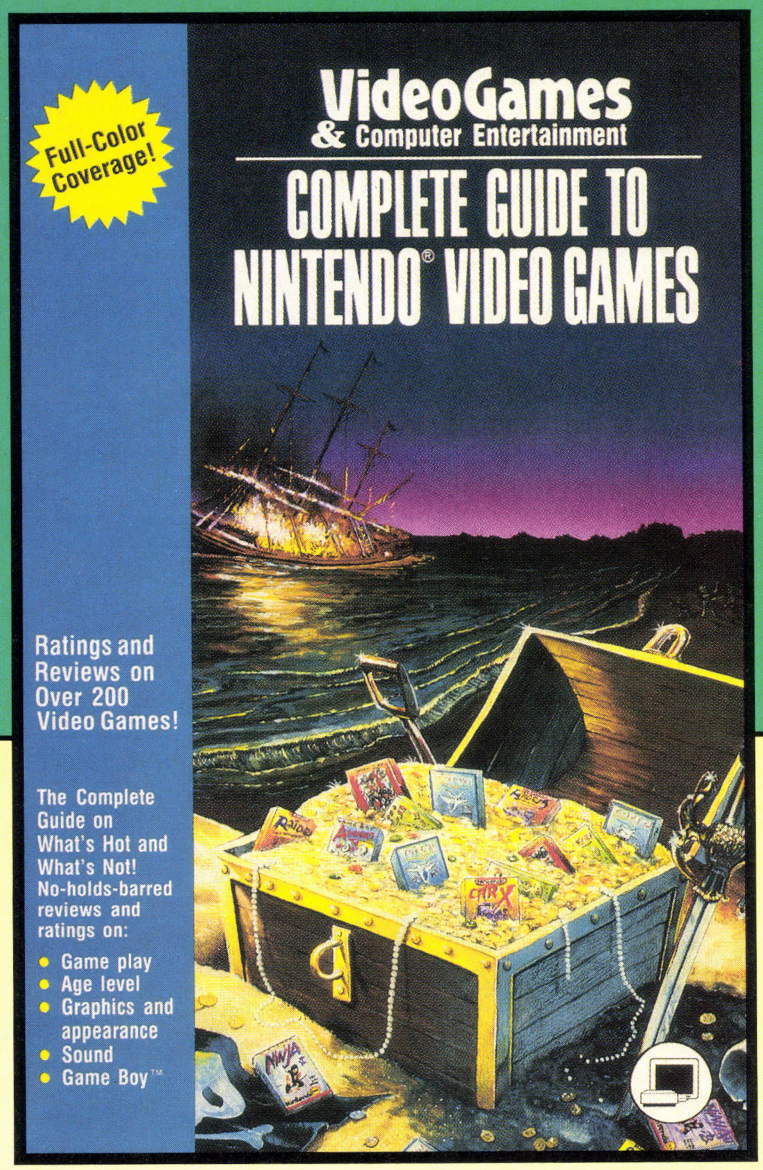
SEGA GENESIS 16-BIT CARTRIDGE

CIRCLE #122 ON READER SERVICE CARD.



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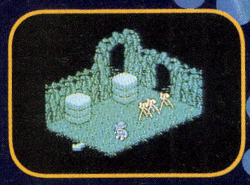

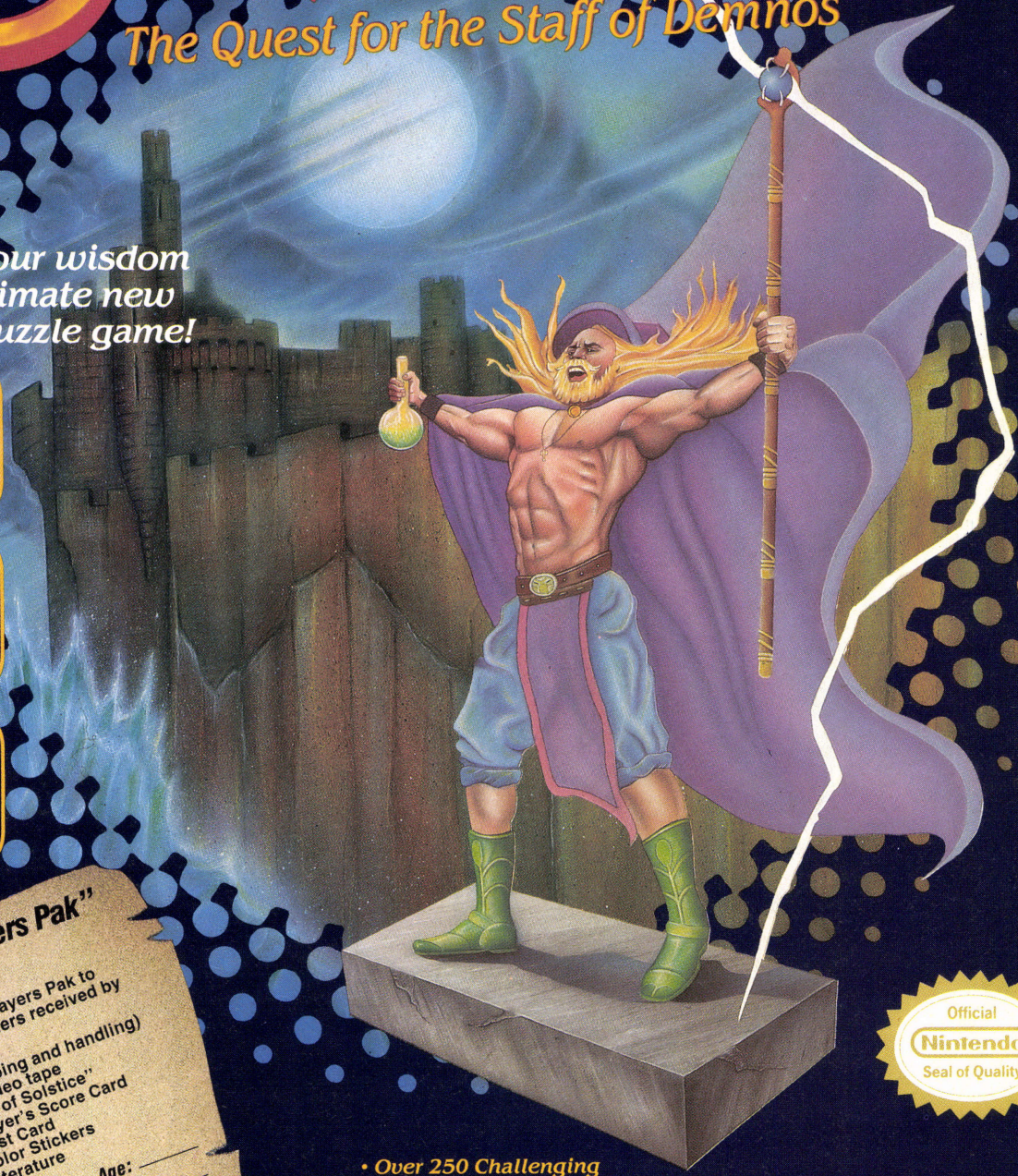

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LICENSED TO PLAY

FROM SILVER SCREEN TO HOME SCREEN

BY PAMELA SELLERS

Box offices are booming and home-entertainment systems are soaring. But instead of battling for the big bucks, game developers and producers are perfecting the license lingo and giving gamers more than they ever imagined.

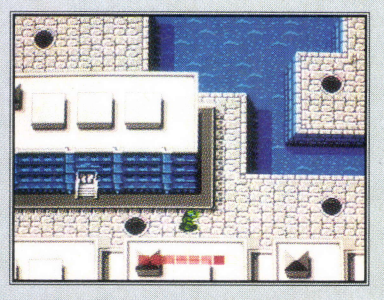
Whether a child or adult, most everyone loves movies, and now the chance to play a video game based upon a film is the ultimate way to immerse yourself further into a film-fantasy world.

ILLUSTRATION BY ALAN HUNTER

Thanks to films like *Star Wars* and *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, new life has been brought to the action/adventure/fantasy genre of filmmaking, and as a result related games have evolved. Recently, however, as a dark and handsome hunk put passion and brains into flying air force jets and four green pizza-worshipping reptiles made battling bad guys "gnarly," video games have entered a whole new ballgame. Once this group of characters leapt from comic books to T-shirts and finally the big screen—though not necessarily in that order—the end result caused such a wave of attention that the licensing industry and the video-game market would never really be the same.

THE WAY THEY WERE AND THE WAY IT IS!

When you look back there's been very little camaraderie between these two creative mediums. In most cases, the past reveals that game developers haven't been so generous with game quality where film adaptations are concerned. For every success, there have been many more flops. During the early '80s, however, both licensing and video games took a break from the limelight to assess their futures. Now as entertainment dollars reach epic revenue proportions and product awareness increases for home video systems, the two industries are reconsidering each other's values and, as a result, forming powerful partnerships.



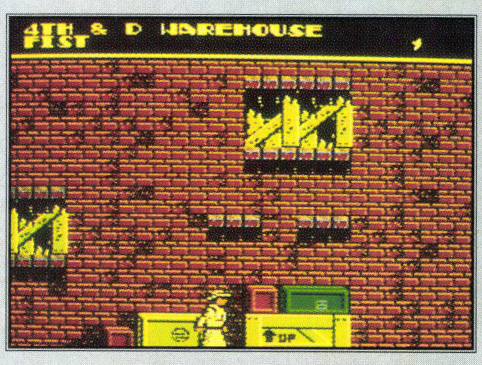
"The impact of the film industry on the video-game industry is significant due to the parallel audiences," says Luana Chambers, a licensing agent for Warner Brothers' Licensing Corporation of America (LCA). "The same kids who enjoy action and adventure on the big screen are anxious to see it translated to video games. It is clear that the video-game industry has become very title-driven. After all, we are both in the entertainment business."

"We've realized that whether we're selling video games, software, music videos or motion pictures, we're all competing for that entertainment dollar," explains Joan Ziegler, marketing director of Hi Tech Expressions, a top Nintendo licensee that is currently releasing *The Hunt for Red October*. "It would be foolhardy of us to think that we're in a smaller field of the entertainment industry just because we develop video games. We're all a part of this industry."

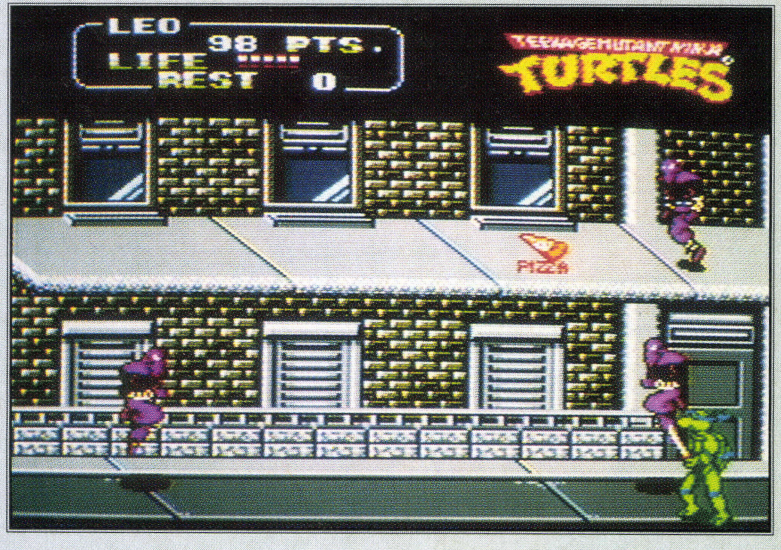
LIGHTS! CAMERA! CASH FLOW!

To understand the licensing process itself, one must understand the motives of the parties involved. For the most part, licensing agencies sell to licensees to increase product awareness and gain royalties. Considering that film-production costs are blowing the roofs off Hollywood high-rises lately, chances are product awareness is a secondary motive.

When the summer box-office roundups came this August, numbers revealed that the season's supposed blockbusters found themselves barely in the black. Up in front was the detective adventure *Dick Tracy*. Although the film stuck Disney Studios with a tab of $35 million, it grossed a pretty profit of $102.3 million, giving its producers well over 100% profit.



Also scoring successfully, this time for 20th Century-Fox, was the $60-million-dollar sequel, *Die Hard 2: Die Harder*, which raked in $101.2 million. Paramount's *Days of Thunder*, production costs ran up to $55 million, probably could have fared better than its intake of $76.9 million, and *Robocop 2* faced the same plight, grossing $43.1 million at an investment of $25 million. A film that barely broke even, *Gremlins 2*, pocketed a mere $39.7 gross. Its producers and backers shelled out $32 million.



Top left and above: *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*
Top right: *Dick Tracy*

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—*Nintendo Power*™ May/June 1990

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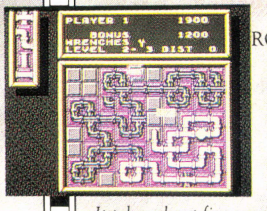

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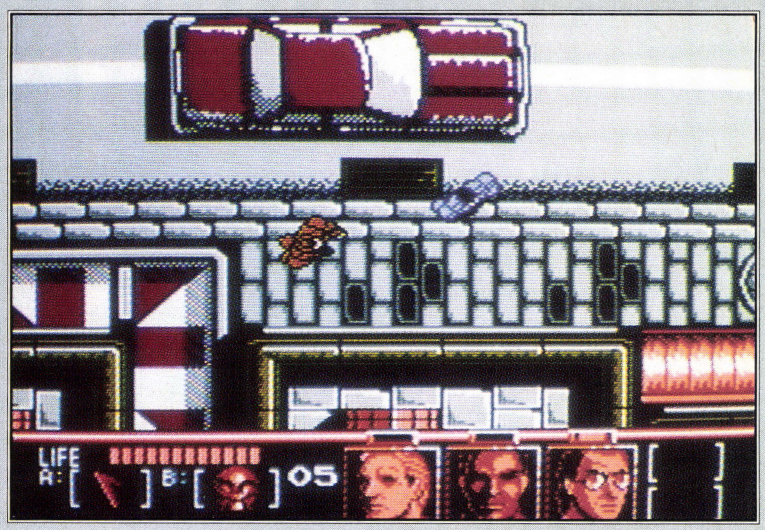


The *Mission: Impossible* TV show has been brought to the Nintendo Entertainment System as a cartridge by Ultra, capturing all of the wild action and intrigue.

So what, you say? Well, all of these titles are currently scheduled for release and will be gaining extra cash in the form of royalties from any combination of the NES, Game Boy, coin-ops or computer software. And, by golly, as if it really needed the extra dough, *Dick Tracy*, will also be available on the Sega Genesis.

"A lot of our revenue comes from video games," admits Paramount licensing agent Kristin Miller. "It's a very lucrative area that's been very good to us. But part of our success has been that we've had good properties available that do well in that category."

What kind of revenue is available? Consider *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*: In the United States alone, 130 licensees develop products using the characters. On a worldwide basis, there are 400 companies doing the same.

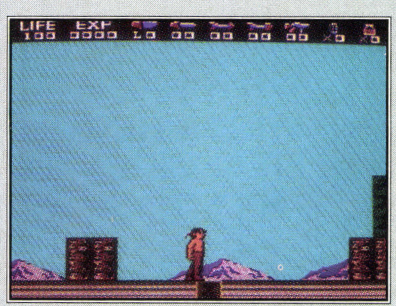
The most beneficial licensee, however, has been Golden Harvest Films, an independent production company that made *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles—The Movie* (a sequel is currently in production) and Konami, the sole licensee of *TNMT*'s video-game rights, which has struck it rich with one arcade-game coin operation, two NES cartridges and a Game Boy cart. While the film grossed well over $132 million at the box office, the arcade game held bragging rights as the number-one coin-op in the U.S. for 1990. In fact, Konami predicts 1990 revenues to reach $62 million from the turtles alone. That's no chump change!

TMNT is not Konami's first film-translation success, however. Of the 13 film and television titles currently available for the NES by Konami, a comfortable portion of the company's $800-million career gain has come with the release of *Top Gun*. It was the impact of the title's release, which literally flew off the store shelves in 1988, that set off an enormous growth in film-title awareness. The result: fierce competition in the game industry and a demand for higher product quality.

"*Top Gun* was one of the first [NES] game licenses at a time when there were very few available," explains Miller, who has worked with Nintendo licensees on such projects as *Mission: Impossible, Friday the 13th, Days of Thunder, Star Trek, The Hunt for Red October, The Untouchables* and, of course, *Top Gun*. "As a result, all of the studios now are trying to license their properties and the number of licensees has greatly increased [over 60 at last count]. Now we're extremely particular about who we work with."

AND THE WINNER IS...?

One company known by producers to excel at "Pin the Video Game on the Movie" is Acclaim. In the last few years, the company has enjoyed steady success with its original licenses and only occasionally has experimented with film and television titles such as *Rambo, Airwolf* and *Knight Rider*. But 1990 was the year that Acclaim went Hollywood in two corporate decisions that put the tidal into the film-licensing wave.

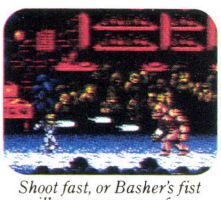


The first big move was an agreement with MCA, Inc., owners of Universal Studios, by which Acclaim acquired its subsidiary company, LJN, Ltd. With that purchase, Acclaim was given the rights to *Who Framed Roger Rabbit?, Friday the 13th, Jaws, Nightmare on Elm Street, Beetlejuice, Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventure* and the *Back to the Future* trilogy.

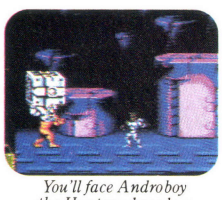
"Our relationship with Acclaim provides an ideal avenue for us to continue participating in the video-game industry," was

Acclaim has been very successful bringing movie and television licenses to the video-game world, as it has done with *Rambo* (above) and *Knight Rider* (below).

Few live to finish this game.



Shoot fast, or Basher's fist will rearrange your face.



You'll face Androboy the Hunter whose box is bigger than his bite.

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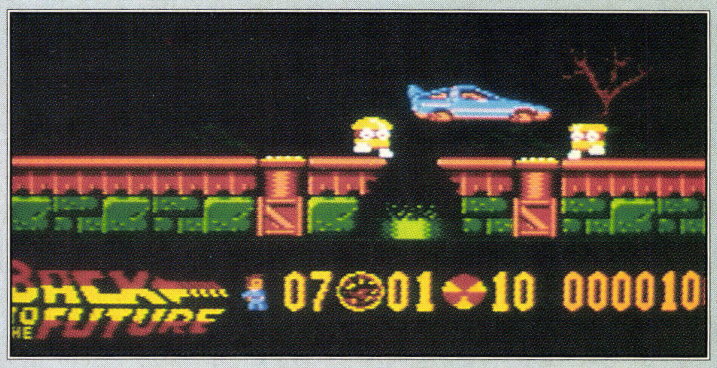

When Acclaim bought LJN Toys, it acquired a bunch of licensed games, such as *Who Framed Roger Rabbit?* (above left), *Nightmare on Elm Street* (left) and the *Back to the Future* series of cartridges (above and right).

the statement made by MCA Executive Vice-President Charles S. Paul in March of this year. "We are confident that LJN will prosper under Acclaim's leadership, and we look forward to contributing to that advancement."

The second move was the nurturing of a relationship from way back, *Rambo*, that provided a tidy connection with a film company called Carolco. Because of Acclaim's previous success with one of their film titles, the production company, whose primary star is Sylvester Stallone, felt comfortable enough to drop off a script they thought had strong video-game potential—*Total Recall*.

"From a business point of view, Carolco came to us with a hot property and said, 'What do we have here?'" remembers Acclaim's marketing director Steve Lux. "We have a good working relationship with Carolco due to the success of *Rambo*. Because of our relationship, we were able to read the [*Total Recall*] script, notice the strength of its characters, its storyline and plot twists. *Total Recall* was something we thought would make an excellent video game."

Another bonus to the friendship with Carolco is a current project, which will remain nameless, that has Acclaim game programmers working right on the set. The purpose: to understand the meaning behind the future film, to perfectly capture and utilize the atmosphere and visuals of the set.

IT'S A MATTER OF BONDING

Relationships? Partnerships? Game developers on the set? All this talk is beginning to sound like a psychotherapy session for the chronically business-minded. And for the sake of the consumer, let's hope so. As producers and developers claim, development bonding has made a big difference in the quality of film-inspired games.

"It is very important, from a studio standpoint, to work closely with our licensees from the concept stage through the development and distribution stages of a video game," explains LCA's Luana Chambers, a member of the team that brought *Batman* to Consumerville. "During the production of *Batman*, Sunsoft [the Nintendo licensee that owns the film's video-game rights] was invited to Pinewood Studios in London on several occasions and basically had carte blanche access to any and all materials available.

"We were even able to set up a screening of *Batman* in Japan for the Sunsoft programmers prior to the film's release," Chambers added. We feel this type of involvement is reflected in the quality of the game. Additionally, Sunsoft was sensitive to our direction, understanding our concerns and working with us to insure accurate representation of all the movie elements."

This trend toward greater game playing for film titles is most likely in response to criticism from many in the gaming field. Nintendo's main competitor, Sega, has laid relatively low in the film-licensing area claiming that there's more to excellent video games than their names.

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- *40 levels of non-stop action!*
- *Password feature returns you to your last completed zone.*
- *Unlimited "continues" gives you Portable Penguin Power.*

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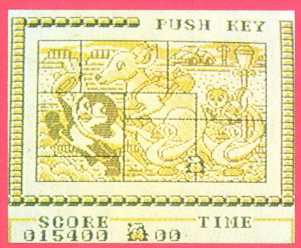

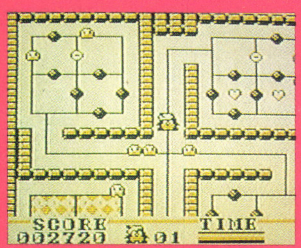

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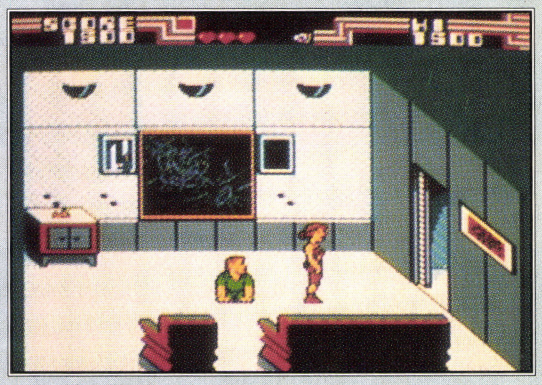
"Just because a title has a familiar name, it's not guaranteed a success," says Sega marketing director Al Nilsen. "With the Nintendo system specifically, their numerous film titles are not necessarily their top sellers. We want to do more than just slap a license on a game.



"What happens a lot, for example, is that a generic flying game will be developed and a big title will be put on it, regardless of the game's quality," Nilsen continues. A game developer has to be careful how the game and the title are integrated."

Action movies are a natural for video games—as demonstrated by such recent entries as Acclaim's *Total Recall* (left) and Sunsoft's *Batman* (below)—and lots of upcoming titles follow this trend as well.

LET'S DO LUNCH, BABE!

The meshing of a license and a game can usually follow one of two patterns. First, a developing company can read a book, see a film or be introduced to the character and develop an idea. Depending on the property's popularity, a "full court press" can occur in which competition explodes and everyone makes their bid via that entity's agent. The agent in turn puts the potential developers in touch with the licensing agent. Finally, the proposal (usually a storyboard of the future game) is made. The tables can be turned, though, and a film or other licensing agent can, like Carolco did with Acclaim, offer a property. Either way, if a company somehow gains the go-ahead, the negotiations can begin.

The negotiating end of any deal is exciting, according to Hi Tech's Joan Ziegler. It's a time for companies to strut their stuff and attract licensing agencies via technology, cash and talent.

"In the negotiating process, there are always a number of companies involved," Ziegler says. Sometimes it's a case of who reached who first or who has the best relationship with the studios. Quite often we have to 'belly up to the bar' and show them that, financially, we are there. But for the most part, it's who's got the technology and the distribution."

As with any competitive negotiating process, speculation arises regarding how much a company must pay once it's given the opportunity to reveal its potential for technology and distribution. The latest agreements to burn the ears of licensees have been Sega's agreement with Joe Montana and Acclaim's lucky catch of what's considered the most popular—and lucrative—license available today, *The Simpsons*. No one, and that means no one, will talk specific numbers, but they will add that high royalty costs are not common.

"It's been my experience that if people have a sure property, they are more comfortable when negotiating partnerships and prices," says Ziegler. "When we meet with a studio, we project their possible revenue and they are usually comfortable with that projection. We then work together to develop a successful product.

"I've heard some rumors about the prices that some companies have paid for licensing rights," Ziegler noted, "and I think,'Good Golly!' To guarantee your first born and right arm in licensing is risky. The best business deals are when everybody wins."

Insider sources reveal that the most a company should yield in the way of a video-game royalty is 50¢ per unit—*tops*. When you think about it, that can result in a good chunk of cash. With all the money floating around, one cannot help but wonder: Will the licensing agencies set aside quality and game play if it means higher royalties?

"The licenses are not necessarily given to the highest bidder," claims Sega's Al Nilsen abruptly. "It is an important factor to consider who will provide the best game...We don't cater to bidding wars. I won't discuss dollar amounts; we have admitted that the agreement with Joe Montana is a multimillion dollar contract. But there's more to it. It consists of many games, and it is over a five-year period of time. So you see, there will be lots coming from [the Montana contract]."

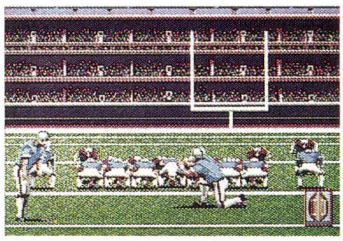
As with any licensing situation, there is always a risk involved. Not only do the parties have to consider the need for game quality and how the public receives the character or film, but they must also consider proper promotions and optimum release times

"Usually, you cannot put together a game until you know what the property is," explains Paramount's Kristin Miller. "A film usually takes six to eight months to produce, but a game can take up to a year. So to have a strong film with a strong box office is great to improve awareness. If the film isn't any good, there's a risk involved."

Continued on page 102

IF YOU CAN PAY IT HERE

512 simultaneous on-screen colors 74K pixel, ultra-high resolution, active matrix backlit LCD screen with



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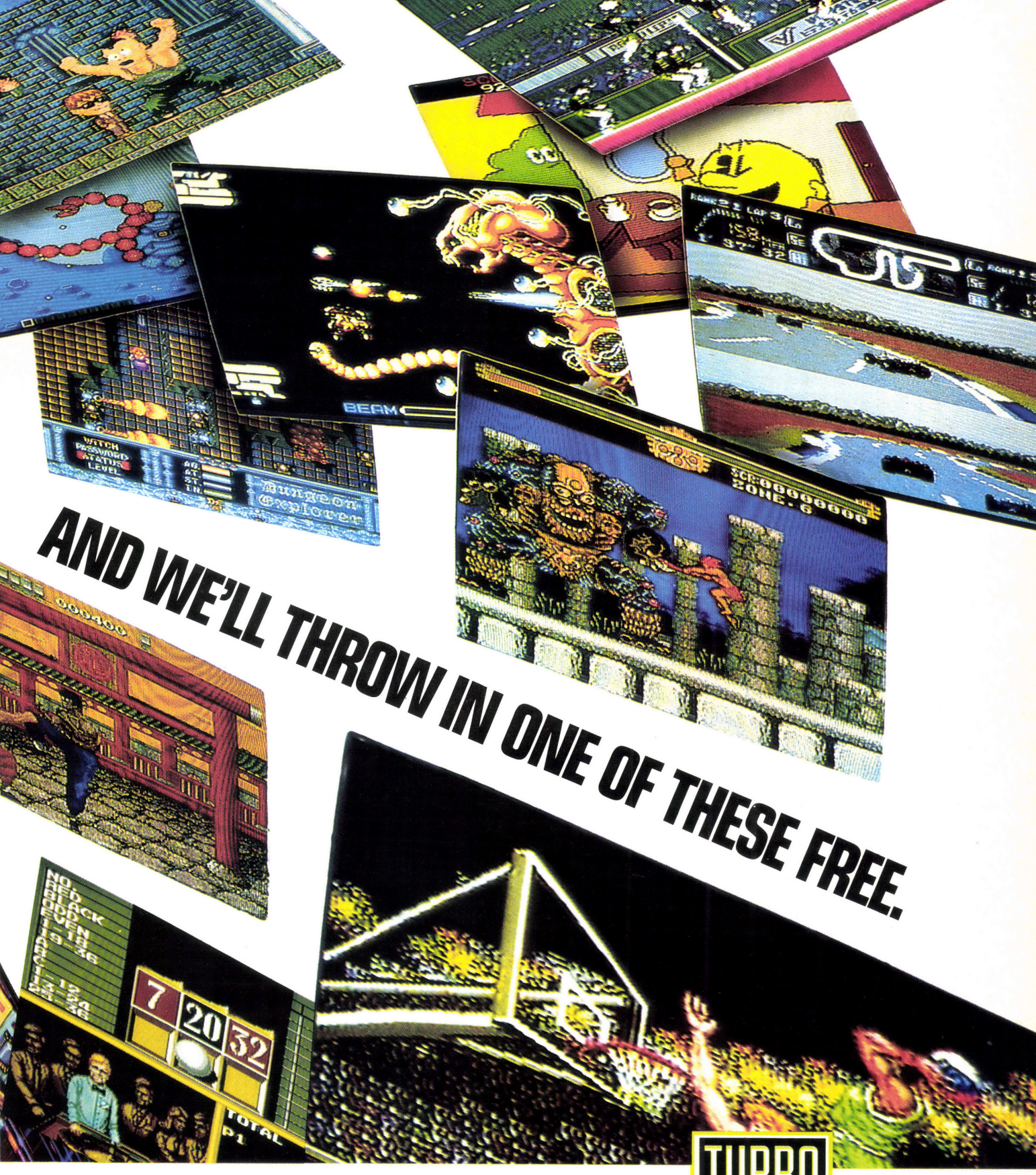
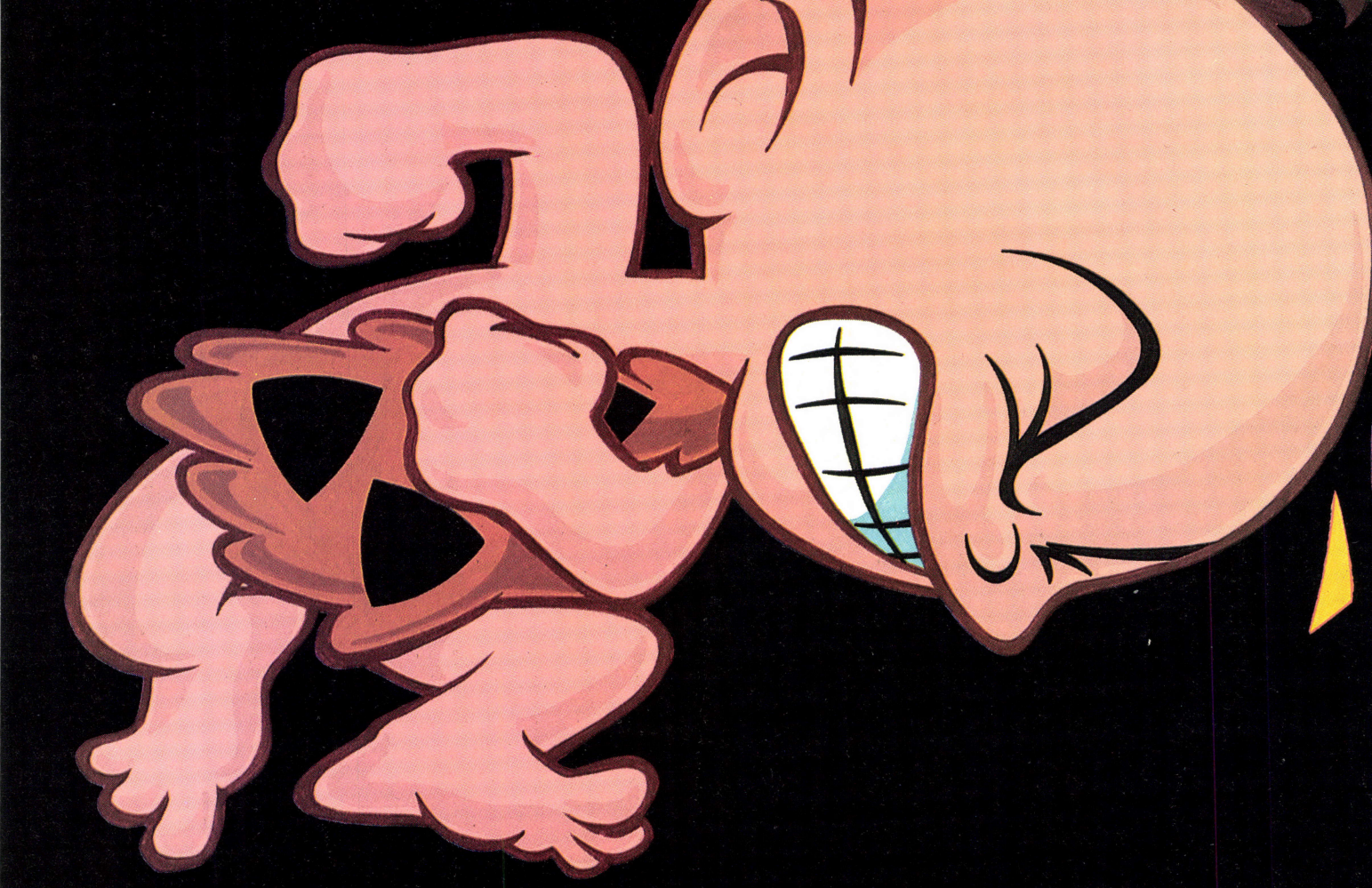


you'll also get any one of 38 selected other killer TurboGrafx-16 details. This offer good between Oct. 1 and Dec. 31, 1990.

TURBO 16 GRAFX™

NEC



IT'S 10,000 YEARS AGO.

YOU MUST BONK 28 STAGES OF BAD GUYS

TO RESCUE YOUR PRINCESS.

AND YOU'VE ONLY GOT 1 WEAPON.

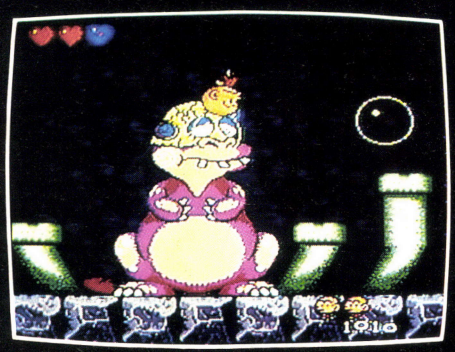
PREPARE TO BUTT HEADS.

You live in a world of prehistoric swamps, tropical forests and stone age deserts. Humongous dinosaurs, primordial gators and various other slimies, beasties and creepies roam at will.

And the bad news is, evil King Drool has kidnapped the Princess Za (a most excellent-looking babe.)

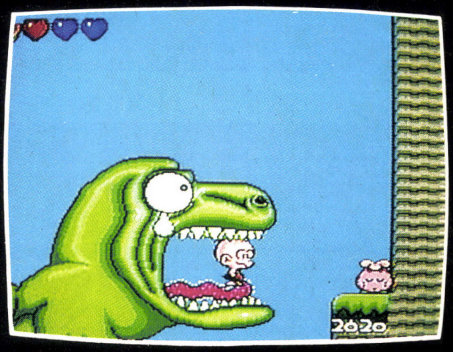
As Bonk, the heroic young Neanderthal head-banger, you will now embark on an epic quest through five levels of monstrous foes to rescue your princess. But there's just one catch. The only weapon you can take with you is your head.

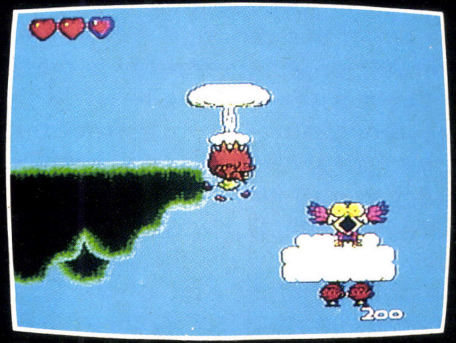
BONK'S ADVENTURE



As Bonk, you must battle Huey, the first Boss. Huey is hypnotized, so he forgets he's really your friend. Just keep bonking him on the head to jog his memory.

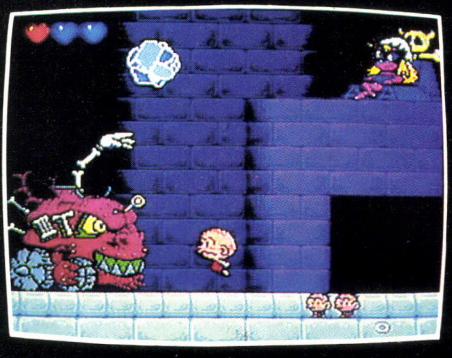
Look for more lives inside the dinosaur. Also remember to check every cave entrance and bonk all walls to find secret bonuses.

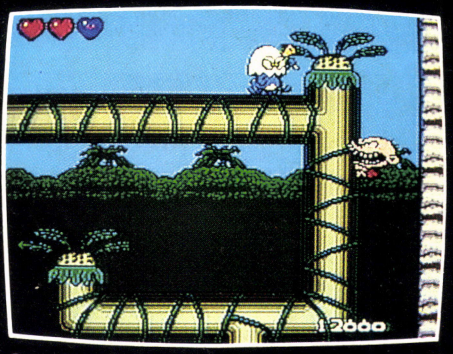




Meat helps Bonk get fired up to beat the bad guys. Like all fast food, you never know when you'll come across it, so keep your eyes peeled.

A most heinous boss, Tractor Head, has a deadly beanball fight with Bonk. You can beat him, just use your head.





Sometimes Bonk needs to climb to get where he's going. Since they hadn't invented the ladder in 10,000 B.C., he uses his teeth.

TURBO 16 GRAFX

NEC

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VIDEO GAME REVIEWS

Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles II

ULTRA

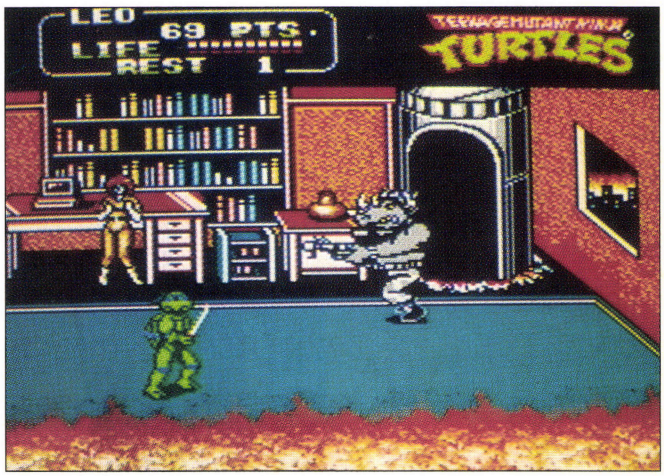
For the Nintendo Entertainment System ($54.95)

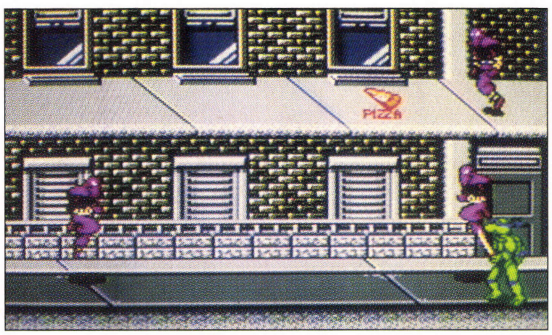
SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	**4**	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10

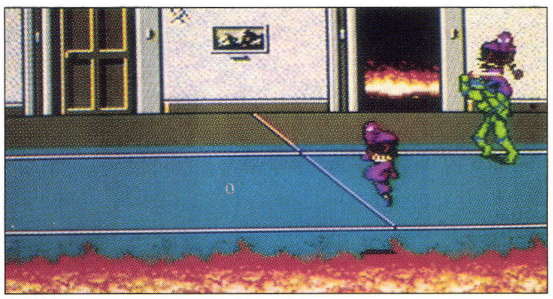
Those who enjoy the *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* find in the series a blend of ninja action, tongue-in-cheek dialogue, off-the-wall gags and some fairly cute characterizations. Those who don't get into *TMNT* probably don't care for either the unpretentiously juvenile humor or constant repetitive violence. Still others haven't even given the *TMNT* a chance, since—in their view—anything that appeals to such a wide audience must be stooping to the lowest common denominator. That may be true, but it still can be fun.

Take the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles out of this cartridge—what little of their humor and personality is present to begin with—and you're left with a spectacular-looking but repetitious action game. It's graphically ambitious, tough to play and packed with nonstop action. But where's the *dudeness*? Where are the funny characterizations? And where, oh where, is the pizza? It's there, but only in short supply (unless you count all the free plugs for Pizza Hut). The action is quite commendable, but the humor and personality are not at the level they should be.

Your goal is simply to get to the end of each level and battle the boss. April's been kidnapped, and—in classic *Super Mario* style—is snatched away just as you defeat her latest captor. Along the way, you come up against hordes of enemy ninjas, robots, mad doctors and other denizens of the evil city. They keep coming every few steps you take, down sidewalks, through the sewers, buildings and everywhere else.







You generally use the same technique on all of them: jump kick them to death. You've only got one kind of kick and two kinds of attack with your hand weapon. You don't learn any new techniques, so the whole game is made up of those three movements over and over, and this is where it can become tedious.

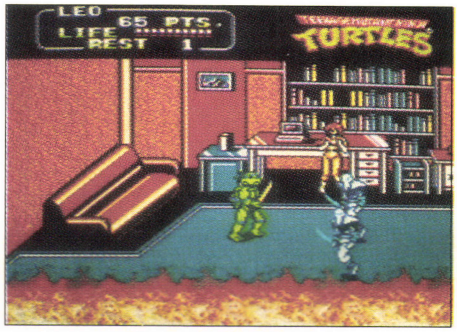
Two can play at once in *TMNT II*; each chooses one of the turtles. But the turtles look nearly identical, so you're bound to end up confused as to which turtle you're controlling. Each of the turtles also carries a different weapon, but I generally found little difference between the effectiveness of one weapon over another. There are three continues that you can utilize, and I found no way to increase that number.

There are a good number of impressive elements to be found in *TMNT II*. The characters are large and well-defined, although there's a lot of on-screen flicker—strange since there are rarely more than five or six moving items on-screen at once.

Other noteworthy graphics: the enormous bouncing balls that inexplicably tumble downstairs in the first scene, the spectacular appearance of the first boss, the wild multilevel scrolling in snowy New York City and helicopter screens. (Yes, you heard that right: multilevel scrolling of the sort usually seen only in 16-bit, "next generation" graphic games). Even explosions are handled far better than in most NES games. Eight-bit graphics are occasionally brought to new heights in this game.

Overall, this game is engaging, but it took this reviewer a long time and a lot of patience to finally arrive at that con-

clusion. The main drawbacks are the constant sameness of the arcade action and lack of the Turtles' wacky sense of humor. The strong points are the exceptional graphics and a few surprising touches along the way.



My advice: Unless you're the rabid sort of *TMNT* fan who'll buy anything with their logo on it, try before you buy. That way, you can't go wrong.

—Joshua Mandel

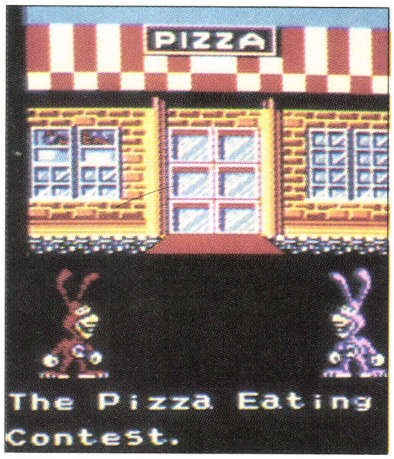
Ultra Software
900 Deerfield Parkway
Buffalo Grove, IL 60089
(708) 215-5100

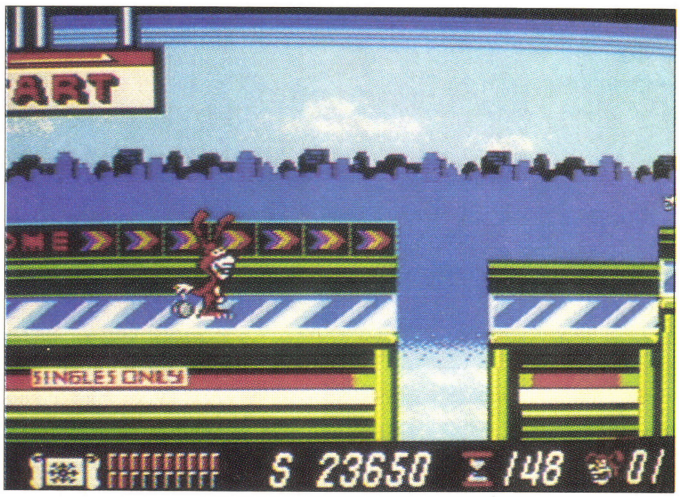
Yo! NOID

CAPCOM

For the Nintendo Entertainment System ($49.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10

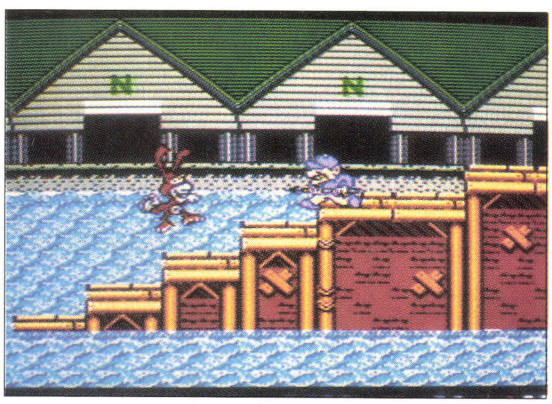




He got his start, innocently enough, in a simple television commercial. With the help of the award-winning "claymation" process, his mischievous antics captured the attention of millions of viewers—and sold a lot of Domino's Pizza too. Other commercials followed, and soon his popularity led to a huge merchandising effort, with his face turning up on T-shirts, toys, dolls, candy and even a gigantic balloon that appears in parades right along with inflatable likenesses of established characters like Woody Woodpecker and SPIDER-MAN. And now he's invading your NES!

So who is this long-eared, red-garbed goofball? It's the Noid, of course. Though this "anti-hero" spends most of his time thinking up devious ways to keep pizza-delivery persons from their appointed rounds, his video-game debut finds him bouncing through the Big Apple in search of his evil twin, the troublemaking Mr. Green. It's not clear why he's so intent on catching up with his chlorophyll-colored counterpart, but with your help, his persistent pursuit is bound to pay off.

Bright graphics and whimsical music make the Noid's quest a lighthearted one, and the comical enemies he faces are not a particularly threatening bunch. As he trots along with good-natured enthusiasm, he can whip bad guys in the face with his killer yo-yo, and the hilariously exaggerated look of concentration that replaces his buck-toothed grin when this happens is worth the price of admission. But that's not the only trick he's got up his scarlet sleeve: Certain bonus items can give him the ability to perform special stunts, and some parts of the game require use of

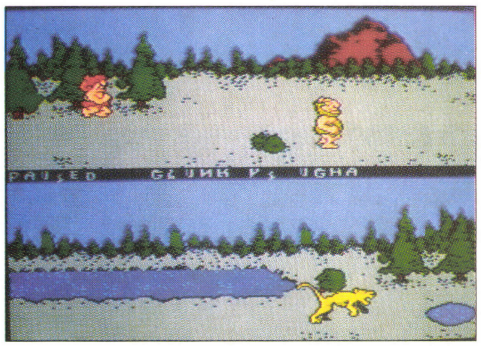


the "Hyperboard" skateboard or the "Pizza Crusher," an oversized pogo stick.

Actually, the Noid's biggest problem in getting through certain areas is not the abundance of enemies, in many cases the location itself is tough enough to do him in. Even the first level, which takes place along the wharf, is a major challenge. Between the rhythmic up-and-

down movements of the land and the abrupt rise and fall of the water level, you'll find it hard to make it through without getting seasick. Just make sure you play the game on an empty stomach, unlike the Noid, who gets to participate in a pizza-eating contest after each odd-numbered level.

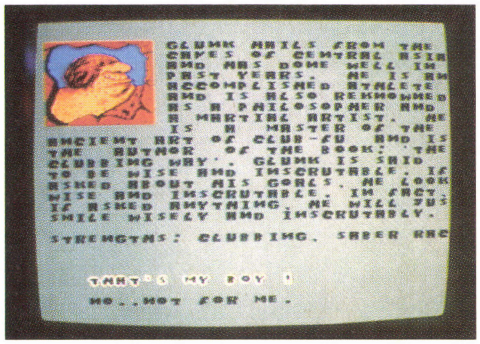
The purpose of these bonus stages is oddly vague; your opponent wolfs down a number of pizzas in each "round," and you can earn one point for each pizza you consume over that number. If you earn enough points, you win. But it's not clear if the Noid has a limit or if there's any reasoning behind the number of pizzas chosen by the other guy. It all seems a bit pointless. But Capcom claims that *Yo! NOID* is aimed at younger players, and the pizza-eating contest is really the only area that's not fun for gamers of all ages.



Activists who are concerned about the increasing use of advertising in entertainment media will surely take a close look at *Yo! NOID*, and the obvious product tie-in will probably be criticized by some. But it should be said that the game doesn't beat you over the head with a Domino's Pizza sales pitch at every opportunity. In fact, the Noid seems to have become much bigger than the role he was created to play, and Domino's isn't afraid to let him stand on his own without the advertising connotations. Most important, if you stripped *Yo! NOID* down to the essentials of game play and replaced the Noid with a newly created character, it would still be an entertaining contest.

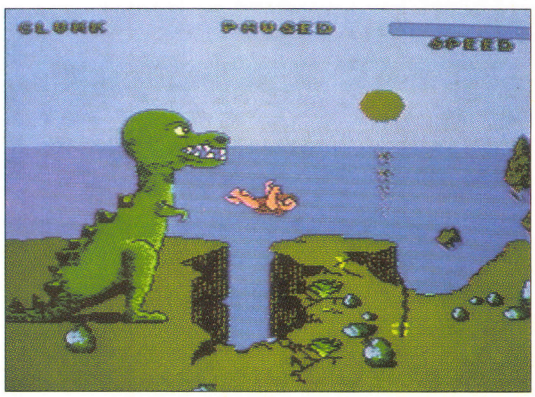
—Chris Bieniek

Capcom U.S.A., Inc.
3303 Scott Blvd.
Santa Clara, CA 95054
(408) 727-0400

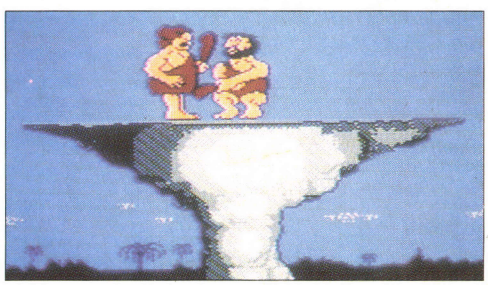


Caveman Games, the NES version of Electronic Arts' *Caveman Ugh-lympics* is both a send-up and an homage to the Epyx *Games* series and its inspired clones that permeated the computer-gaming industry during the mid-'80s—and even today. The game play's premise is the same: six Olympic-style events tied together by a central theme. In this case, it's the prehistoric times of cave dwellers. Or, more specifically, that nonexistent, fictionalized era when Neanderthals and dinosaurs dominated the land, as so popularized by the black-and-white movies of the 1950s.

Those familiar with Epyx's *Games* line will feel right at home with *Caveman Games*. There are six cave events to choose from and six different personalities to represent your player. Up to six people can play, taking turns on some events while competing in groups of two on others. You can practice playing any one of the six events before engaging in all of them in the formal competition. Finally, there's a "Caves of Fame" listing the current records made and broken in an individual event.



Adapted from Electronic Arts' *Caveman Ugh-lympics*, Data East's *Caveman Games* for the NES has all of the wacky events of the computer original, such as the Dino Race, Mate Toss and Dino Vault.



Each of the six characters to select from displays strengths and weaknesses for competing in a particular event. For example, Ugha is adept at the fire-making and dino-race contests, while Vincent—the only "intellectual" of the group—has no listed strengths. Cutesy mini-biographies along with each caveperson's head shot have been

Caveman Games

DATA EAST

For the Nintendo Entertainment System ($49.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	**5**	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	**5**	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	**5**	6	7	8	9	10

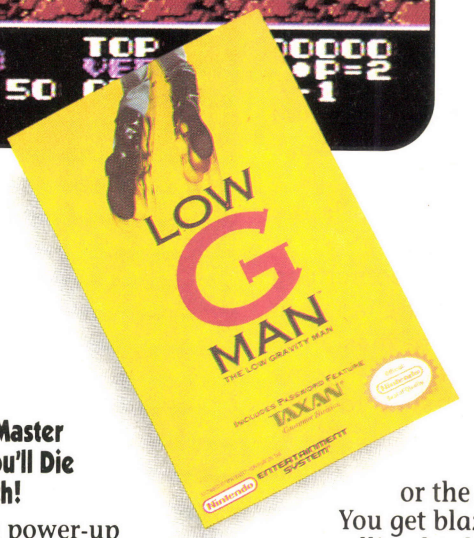
Stab!

Official Nintendo Seal of Quality

Stab a frozen ForceFace to gain the powerful Wave!

The spear really helps when climbing the mighty cliffs!

Power-up your spear to attack "Long-distance"!



Do You Have the Intense Concentration Required to Save the Countries of United Earth from War-Crazed Robots?

The lives of trillions depend on you – Low G Man, the most incredible warrior alive. If you are to succeed in your near impossible quest, you must master the deadly armor-piercing spear, an electro-magnetic disruptor pistol and a *super-human jump (up to 1¾ screens)*!

If You Don't Master the Spear, You'll Die a Quick Death!

After you power-up your anti-gravity back-pack you can blast from above: *WAY ABOVE*! Stab or use one of your many acquired weapons:

a Boomerang, Fireball, Bomb, or the *awesome Wave*!

You get blazing action, detailed scrolling backgrounds, multiple levels, heavy power-ups, infectious music, *infinite continue & password*.

Are You Worthy of "Low G Man"?

Everyone can play Low G Man, but only a few can master it.

If you're ready for a game that gives you everything and only asks for your extreme concentration, then watch for Low G Man.

TAXAN
Consumer Division

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CIRCLE #131 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

added to make the gamer's character selection seem much more exciting than is really necessary. Naturally, the biographies contain several Stone Age puns with references to "rock" bands and "club fu" that will induce more groans than giggles.

The best way to describe each event in *Caveman Games* is to contrast it with an athletic contest often seen on other video-game screens. The mate toss is essentially the hammer throw—except your cave contestant spins and throws a cavewoman instead. The saber race is a two-man dash with a unique incentive to keep moving: A hungry saber-toothed tiger tries to catch up from behind to devour the slowest competitor. The dino vault is pole vaulting in which a dinosaur is the obstacle that must be vaulted over. Perform this badly and your caveman will either fall into a canyon or fly right into the dino's jaws. The Dino Race, featuring dino-back riders, is similar to a two-player equestrian competition. The one-on-one clubbing contest is a cross between fencing and the event on the TV show *American Gladiators* where two gladiators battle one another with giant Q-Tips atop above-ground platforms.

About the only genuinely original event in *Caveman Games* is the tedious Fire Start. The one who can start a campfire first by rubbing sticks is the winner.

Game play lends a little something more to be desired. The challenge in *Caveman Games* lies not in mastering the events themselves but the game controls. Particularly frustrating to learn how to play is Fire Start, which tends to be more exhausting than enjoyable. However, once you get the technique down, this event becomes a cinch to do (as do all the others). Competitive play with other people appears to be the intention for *Caveman Games*, but this need seems better suited for other titles to fulfill.

A great ad man once said, "Sell the sizzle, not the steak." And, for the most part, that's what *Caveman Games* is—more sizzle than steak.

—Howard H. Wen

Data East USA, Inc.
470 Needles Drive
San Jose, CA 95112
(408) 286-7074

Back to the Future, Part II & III

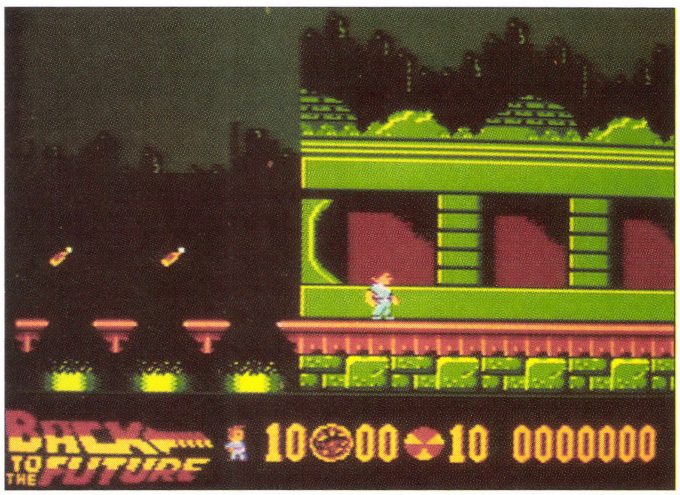
LJN

For the Nintendo Entertainment System ($44.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	**3**	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	**3**	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	**4**	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	**3**	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Let's go back. No, not to the future, but back to March 1990. In that month's issue of VG&CE, Chris Bieniek gave *Back to the Future*, the NES game, a low rating. In his review he explained why the game was bad, concluding that many players would "likely consider it a dud." There was also mention that a game based on *Back to the Future, Part II* would be arriving. "Let's hope it's an improvement over the original," Chris said optimistically.

As a fan of all the *Back to the Future* films, I could see—to a degree—why the NES game based on the first movie was not up to expectations. *Back to the Future* isn't action-packed, nor does it have many key scenes that can be easily translated into a comparable video-gaming experience. But last year's adventure-filled sequel, *Back to the Future, Part II*, featured numerous possibilities. And, though it was less action-paced, the third and final installment that came out last summer had a great locale, the Old West.



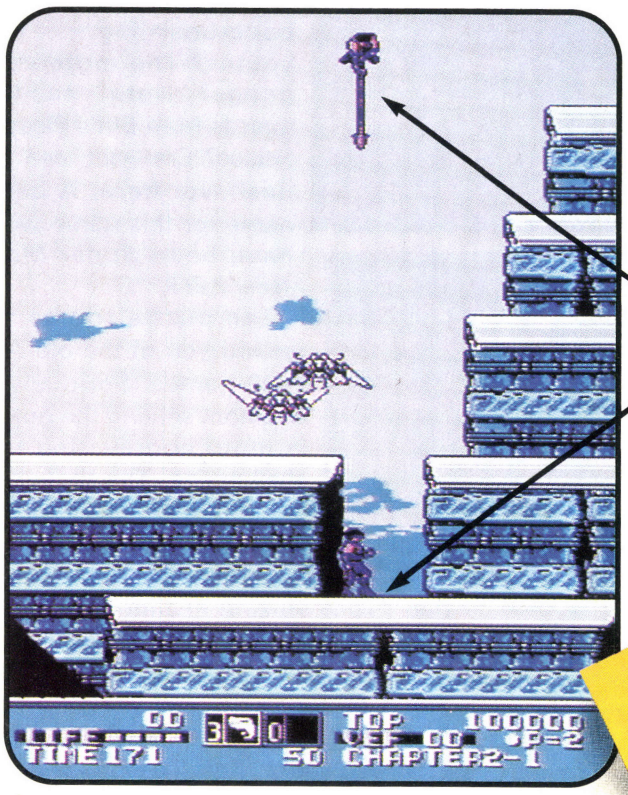
Combining the last two films of the series into one cartridge, LJN has blended the action and comedic aspects of the *Back to the Future* movies in its *Back to the Future, Part II & III* game for the NES.

So after much anticipation, I was excited to receive a copy of LJN's *Back to the Future, Part II & III* to review. Two separate games based on the films have been placed back-to-back in the same cartridge. "Wow," I thought, turning the manual's pages, "two for the price of one." Then I started playing....

Chris described the look of the original *Back to the Future* as a "lame *Paperboy* rip-off." *Back to the Future, Part II &*

Jump!

Official Nintendo Seal of Quality



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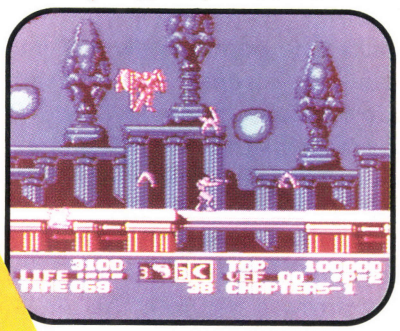

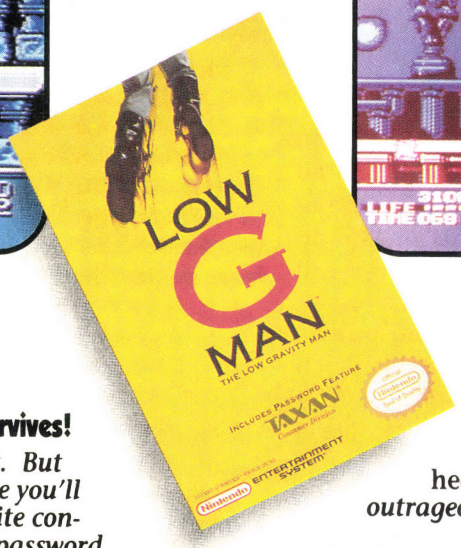

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CIRCLE #132 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

III not only looks, but *is*, a lame *Super Mario Bros.* rip-off—minus the good graphics, sound/music and game play.

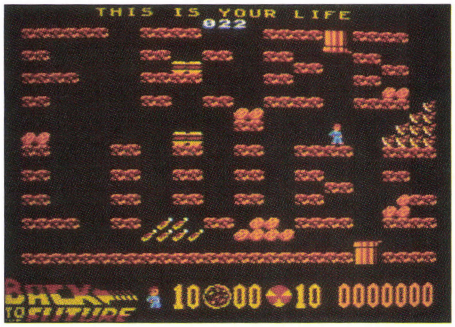
As in the second movie, Biff Tannen from 2015 has gone back to 1955 with the DeLorean time machine, giving his younger self a sports almanac. When Marty McFly and Doc Brown arrive back in 1985 from the 21st century, they discover that Hill Valley has been horribly altered by an evil Biff, who has used the information in the almanac to win a fortune and build a corrupt empire. From there, the video game diverges slightly from the film's plot: The 1985 Biff—and apparently his 1955 and 2015 counterparts, too—have scattered 30 items through the aforementioned three time periods.

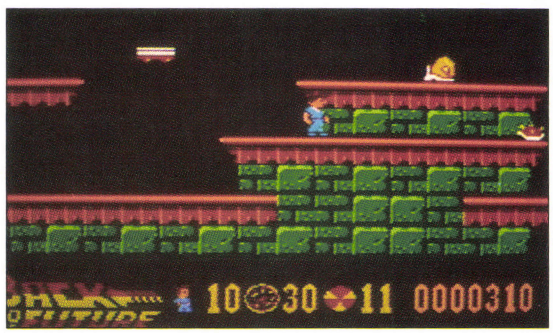
As Marty McFly, you must recover these 30 items and put them back in their original time periods. This will restore 1985 to the way it was and stop the unraveling of the space-time continuum. In your mission, you must also get a compass to find your way around.

Each time period is divided into 16 levels—or "streets"—that resemble crude versions of *Super Mario Bros.* screens and other similar games. Objects are found behind locked doors, which can be opened only with a key. To get a key, you make Marty jump on an enemy creature, which will then sometimes throw a key into the air. Sound familiar? A few of these creatures will even release a star, which Marty can catch to attain—yes—shooting power. *Super Mario Bros.*-like obstacles, such as platforms moving in midair that Marty can jump on, are built into these screens as well.

Inside the rooms, you must solve puzzles (by collecting items within a time limit) before you are given the object. Then, you must find a hidden "puzzle room" and return the specified object. To complicate matters, the letters of the object's name have been scrambled.

Marty will need to jump from one time period to another to perform all these duties. This is done by calling Doc with a walkie-talkie and hopping into the DeLorean as it hovers by. After the time controls are set, it's back to the future...or the past. Performing these time jumps takes a specific number of nuclear fuel tokens, which Marty can collect throughout his time travels. But too many time jumps can have disastrous results: Marty might run into his previous self, which will create a paradox and result in the loss of one life.





***Back to the Future, Part II & III*, by LJN, takes Marty McFly from one time period to another to recover 30 items and bring them back to their proper eras, saving the time-space continuum from destruction.**

Besides the extremely poor graphics, the enemies are a strange assortment of creatures that look like rejects from a *Super Mario Bros.* game. Where are the hoverboarding feral youths? The motorcycle gangs? Hotel security guards from Biff's Pleasure Palace? Crew-cut teen bullies? Not here. A better name for this game would have been *Super Marty McFly 2 & 3.*

The puzzle rooms will remind you of the old Atari 2600 games. Seriously. In addition, solving the puzzles is more aggravating than challenging. The thought of going through all 30 screens is a major turnoff. One of these puzzle rooms is entitled "That Sinking Feeling"—a feeling you'll often experience while playing.

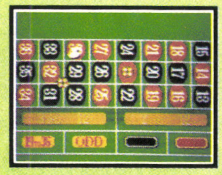
When you complete the first game, you'll move to the Old West portion, where you must rescue Doc, who's stranded there. This game is a *Super Mario Bros.* clone too! There are only 16 levels in this second mission and just ten items to be found and put back in place. Hence, this is one-third the length of the first game.

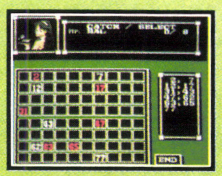
There's little mention of the Old West game in the manual, and with good reason: It's not worth trudging through the first part for. The instructions also fail to document that you can hold down the B button, press **SELECT** from the title screen and then rearrange the scrambled letters to read "FLUX CAPACITOR IS THE POWER," which will take you directly to the Old West.

Then there's the soundtrack. The rousing movie score by Alan Silvestri isn't here. ZZ Top's "Doubleback" isn't here either. Instead, a mangled version of Huey Lewis and the News' "Back in Time" plays at the title. Then, once the

VEGAS DREAM

IS HERE!





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Available April, 1990.

HAL AMERICA INC.™

The Funatic Specialists™

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CIRCLE #133 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

game is started, generic Nintendo music—of the worst kind—takes over.

It's astonishing that the blockbuster *Back to the Future* movies—one of the most spirited adventure trilogies—have been turned into a trio of mega-lackluster NES games. How this happened is probably as mysterious as the space-time continuum itself. "Great Scott!" as Dr. Emmet Brown would exclaim. When I cast aside my love for the movies, I saw *Back to the Future, Part II & III* for what it truly is—a turkey.

—H. H. W.

LJN Ltd.
Distributed by Acclaim Distribution, Inc.
71 Audrey Ave.
Oyster Bay, NY 11771
(516) 922-2400

Frankenstein

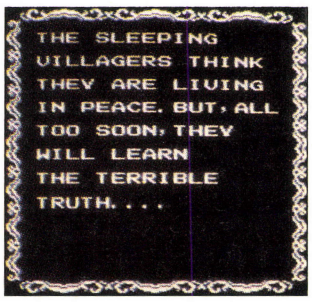
BANDAI

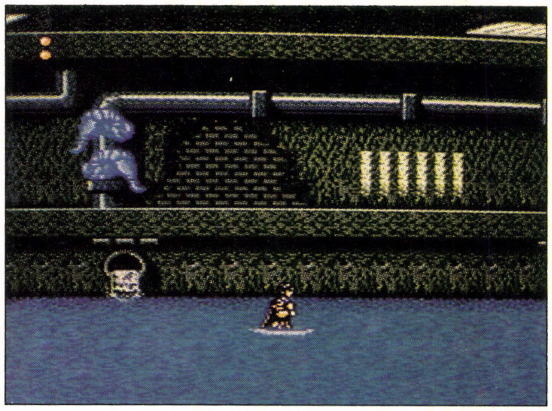
For the Nintendo Entertainment System ($44.99)

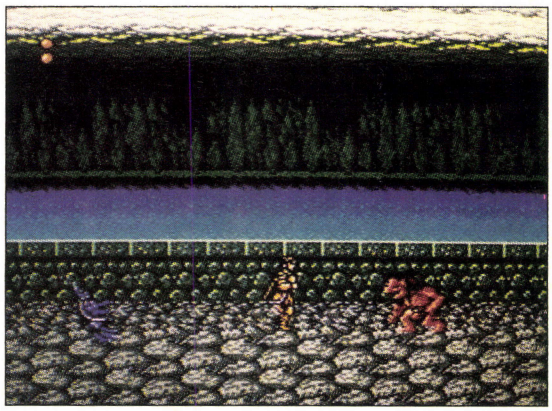
SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10

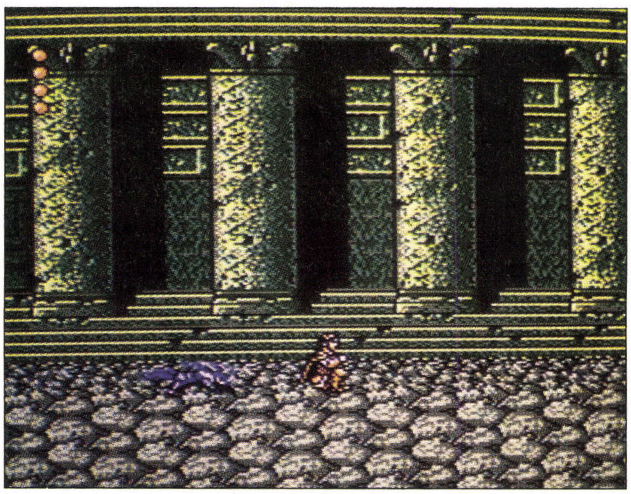
Frankenstein comes to the NES screen in this second video-gaming effort by Bandai based on a famous monster. In *Frankenstein*, the scenario depicts Dr. Frankenstein's undead creation as an evil sort, who pillages the town of Transylvania and kidnaps the fair lass Emily. "I will take this girl for my own!" he proclaims. This is not the benevolent and misunderstood creature portrayed in the original novel and films.

Playing the role of an adventurer whom you may christen with any six-character name, it's up to you to save Emily. After choosing your name, it's off to the action. Moving your player through a village street, you must fight rabid, purple dogs, demons, gargoyles and a host of other monsters who are under Frank's power. Your character can enter buildings where treasure chests containing potions to increase your life energy points may be opened. Sometimes a creature must be defeated before you can get these chests.









Bandai's *Frankenstein* for the NES puts you up against the enormous beast, in an effort to save Emily, one of Transylvania's innocent citizens.

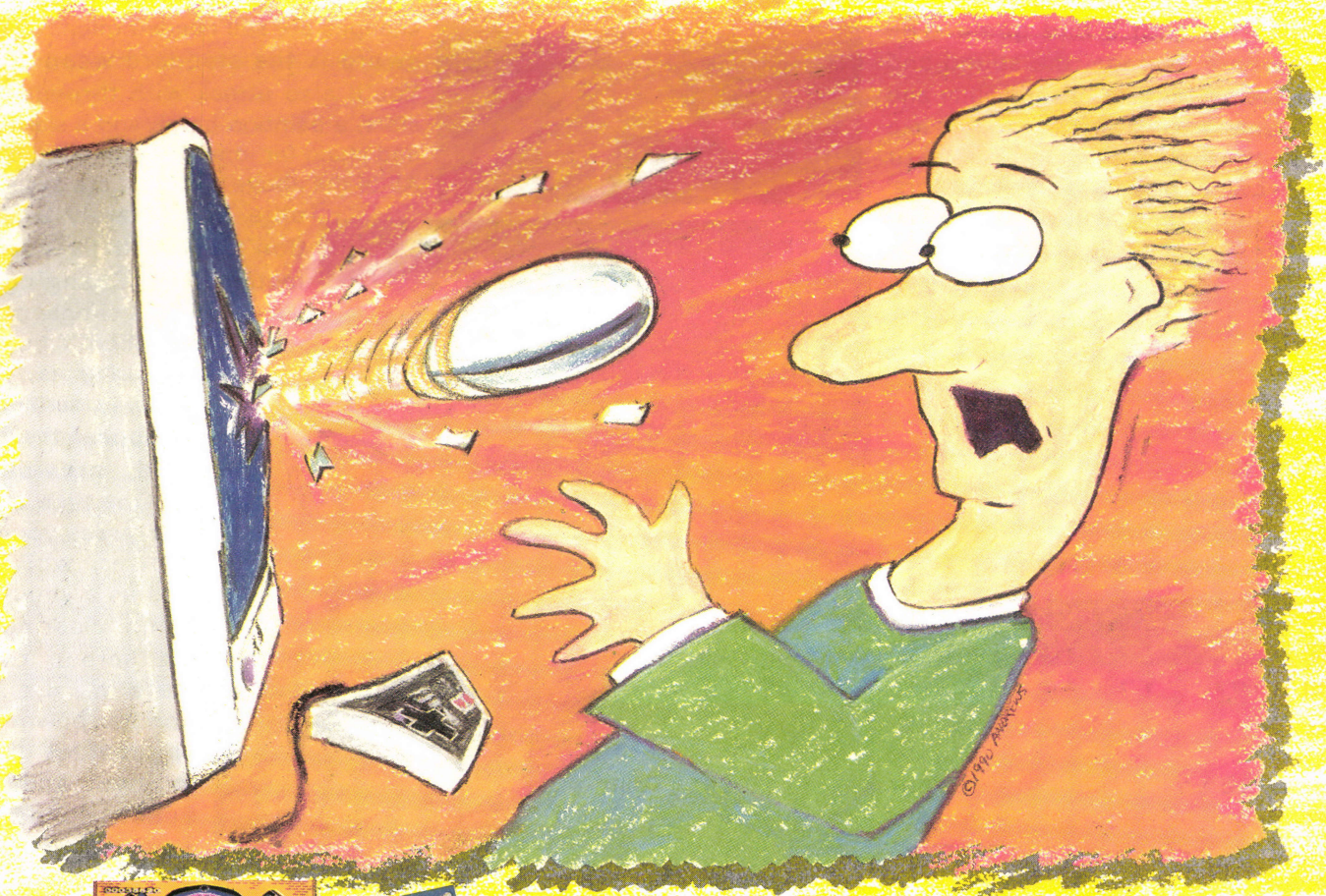
At first, your only means of bringing down the monsters is the standard punching and aerial kicking. Some of the fallen enemies leave behind weapons, which may be picked up and used. Your potential weapons inventory includes various clubs, hooks, swords and firing power. Many of these can be used indefinitely, or at least until your player is struck down by a monster, after which they must be replaced or quickly picked up off the ground before they disappear. Floating heart shapes, which restore your character's life energy, can also be retrieved.

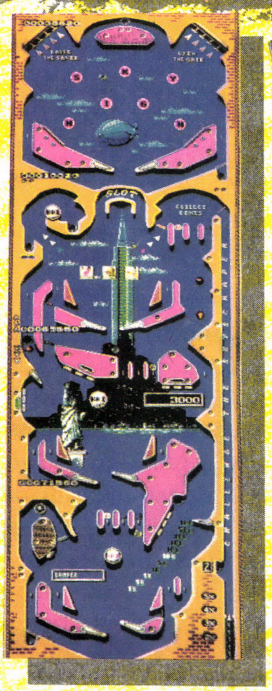
Frankenstein is broken up into several stages of play. The monsters you must challenge on your journey to Frankenstein's hideout range from the arrogant Demon Horse to the out-of-place Medusa. Besides the aforementioned village streets, game play takes place in such environs as a forest, a sewer, a castle and a cemetery, to name just a few.

The biggest problem with *Frankenstein* is its handling of your player's lives. Besides picking up hearts and life potions, only a maximum of five hits can be sustained. After that, the game must be continued, and only two continues are allowed. None are given if you are starting the game with a password.

The background graphics are nice,

COMIN' AT YA!





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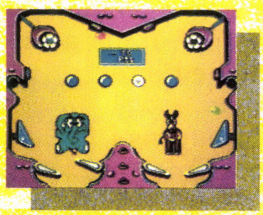

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From the makers of REVENGE OF THE 'GATOR

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and careful attention is given to textures. The game characters themselves while richly detailed are a bit small in size. Compared to other recent NES games of this type, *Frankenstein* falls short in this area.

Frankenstein is standard video-gaming material, not a bad game. The graphics are average, the sound and music are average and its difficulty and challenge are too. The end product is a game that won't disappoint—or excite—casual players. Pickier gamers, on the other hand, will probably find *Frankenstein* terminally bland.

—H. H. W.

Bandai America, Inc.
12951 East 166th St.
Cerritos, CA 90701
(213) 926-0947

Ninja Spirit

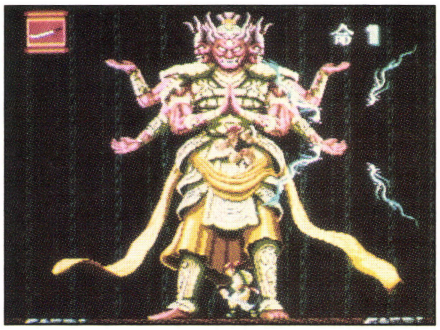
NEC

For the TurboGrafx-16 ($61.99)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10

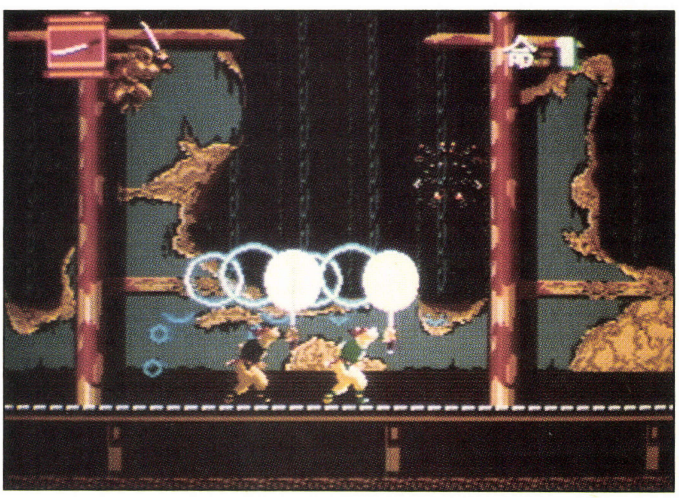
What's a young ninja to do? Your father was murdered right before your eyes by another evil ninja in the guise of a wolf (your average ninja in wolf's clothing). As Moonlight, your quest is to seek out the beast that killed your father and tear him, as well as his cronies, limb from limb.

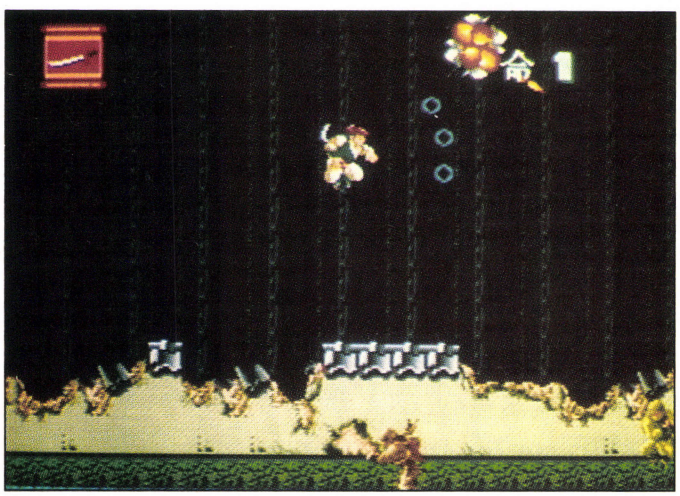
Ninja Spirit is a horizontally scrolling martial-arts fighting game that originally appeared in the arcade. Game play is divided into seven areas, each filled with followers of the dark side of ninja magic. The backgrounds consist of dark temples and stormy nighttime landscapes and provide a perfect backdrop for the action. Wind-blasted trees, steep cliffs and rocky outcroppings must be carefully navigated while keeping alert for enemies. In the temple and cave areas, your character may actually move along the ceiling to evade the dark ninja's attacks.



A variety of weapons are at your disposal. Each stage is designed so that a specific weapon will be most effective throughout, but weapon changes are still needed often. The sword is the standard weapon. You'll also attack with throwing stars, a bamboo bomb and a sickle and chain for long distance attacks. All of the above weapons are available immediately and don't have to be collected. Changing weapons is as simple as pressing the **SELECT** button anytime during play.

Along the way, certain ninjas will appear that, when killed, provide power-ups. One type of power-up increases your weapon power, while another acts as a smart bomb, clearing the screen of enemies. Another power-up provides up to two additional "shadows" of yourself that copy your movements exactly (including all jumps and shots taken) but cannot be hurt. The last power-up surrounds your characters with a shield of yellow fire, helping to protect you from enemy shots for a short time.





As each level is completed, a boss must be defeated (standard operating procedure). Some may be hurt only with certain weapons, and each requires some strategy and practice to defeat.

Both one- and two-player modes are available; the two players alternate as one or the other dies. Two modes of play are possible: The first is like the arcade version in that, if your player is hit, he dies. The second version allows

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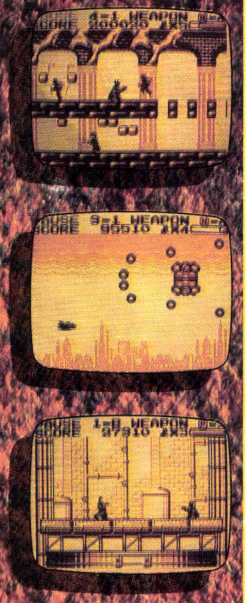

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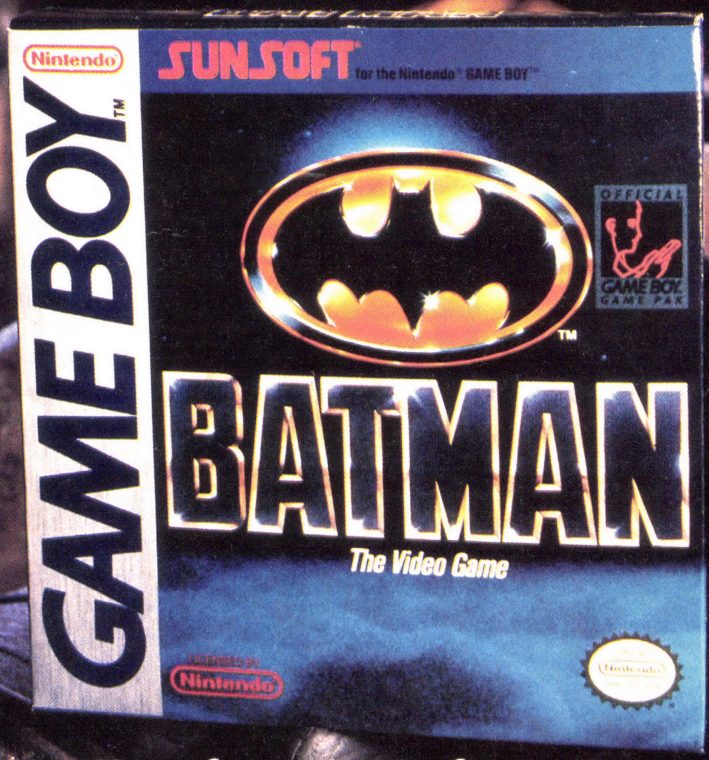

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your player to be hit five times before kicking off. An on-screen indicator in the upper-left and -right corners show your current weapon and the number of hits remaining, if applicable.

The game provides unlimited continues, and believe me, you'll need them. It takes some time to figure out which weapons to use where and devise a strategy that will get you through an area alive. Even if you know how to get through an area, the game play is so frantic that you will most certainly be kept on your toes.

If you want an idea of how the NEC version looks and plays, check out the arcade version. The translation to the TurboGrafx-16 is practically flawless. The graphics are excellent, as are the sound effects and music. The animation is smooth, and flicker is evident only when the screen is really packed. Don't expect any cartoonish graphics and action here. *Dragon Spirit* is a great example of the TurboGrafx-16's abilities.

—Brent Walker

NEC Home Electronics, Inc.
1255 Michael Drive
Wood Dale, IL 60191-1094
(708) 860-9500

Hellfire

SEISMIC

For the Sega Genesis (NA)

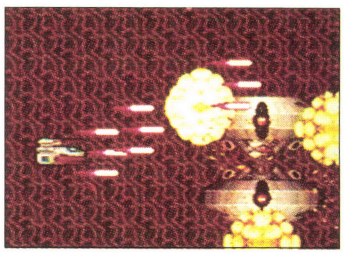
SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10

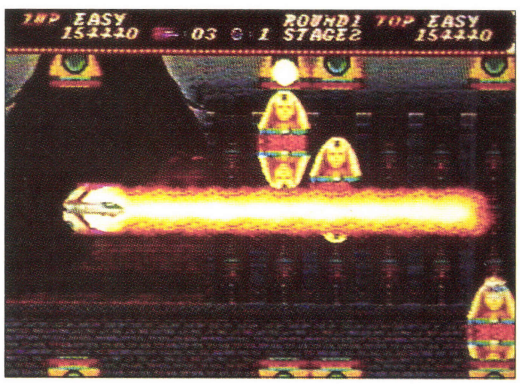
Hellfire is a scrolling side-view shooter with all the elements that games like this feature, such as...

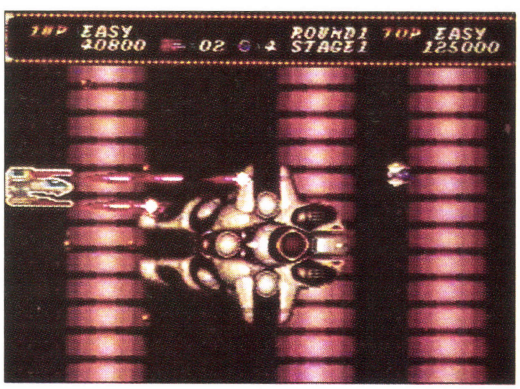
An overly dramatic game scenario. It's 2998 and the Black Nebula has begun sucking away star systems. The Galactic Federation's entire weapons' defense system has been taken over by an ominous force called the Super Mech, which controls the ever-increasing power of the Black Nebula. With the only means of defense destroyed, a dark cloud has literally been cast over the fate of the galaxy, and the Federation is helpless to do anything. But wait! In settings like this, there's always a...

Lone spaceship. You pilot a powerful starfighter, the CNCS1. Your mission is to infiltrate the six planets captured by the Super Mech and destroy the enemy's weapons in your quest to save the galaxy. Flying robots and other types of mechanical attackers swarm around your craft and fire on it. The CNCS1 shoots in four different directions of your choosing: forward, backward, up and down and diagonally in four angles. In video games like this, your firepower can be augmented by destroying certain enemy weapons that, naturally, release...

***Hellfire*, by Seismic, brings the intense side-scrolling arcade shoot-'em-up to the Genesis, requiring you to battle it out against the Super Mech for control of the entire galaxy.**







Power-up units. The CNCS1's laser shots can be doubled or tripled by picking up a specified power-up capsule. Other auxiliaries will increase the speed of your spaceship, provide a temporary shield or award extra lives or points. One even gives you a hovering robot that goes on automatic search-and-destroy missions. Then there are the hellfire blasts, which incinerate all alien weapons. Of course, you should have your ship's firing upgraded as soon as possible. Because at the end of every stage in a game like this, you always have to face a...

Boss enemy. This guy is the toughest of the tough, the baddest of the bad, the biggest of the big, and the one you absolutely have to defeat in order to advance to the next level. Most of the time, the only way you can defeat a boss enemy is by finding out its...

Achilles' heel. As a general rule, all superbly complex looking and seemingly powerful enemies in a video game such as this have a fatal weak spot. Finding and exploiting it is the challenge. There are six Super Mech bosses for you to defeat—and an additional number of "intermediate" ones to deal with as well.

The graphics in *Hellfire* are a little below the usual standard that Genesis owners have come to expect. The music tracks sound suspiciously familiar, as if they were lifted from other Genesis titles. Though this cannot be confirmed, it seems that a number of Genesis games share the same, fast-tempo

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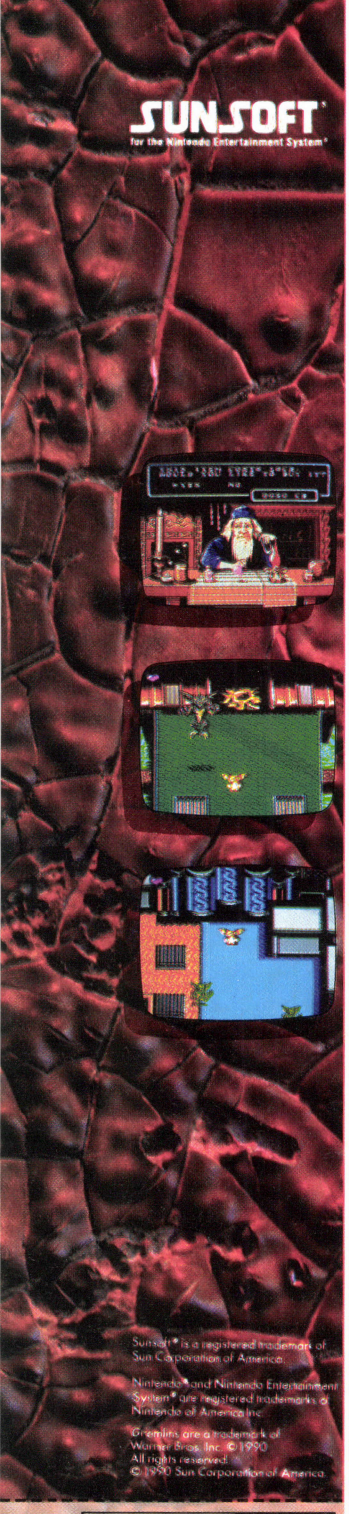

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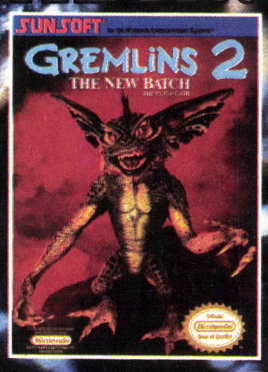


We warned you!

bass rhythm in their soundtrack. Hence, the similarities in their music.

Game control proves to be a problem. It is too difficult to maneuver your starship with the precision needed, especially in the higher stages, while playing on the control pad. *Hellfire* requires an arcade controller in order to work best. Thus, the Genesis' add-on joystick not only helps, but also greatly enhances overall game play.

This game can't be praised for originality, but *Hellfire* does, at least, deliver the action. Many may not find this a good enough reason to buy it, but some will. After all, there has to be a reason why so many scrolling, side-view shooters are around.

—H. H. W.

Seismic Software Inc.
3375 Scott Blvd., Suite 100
Santa Clara, CA 95054
(408) 727-3682

Battle Royale

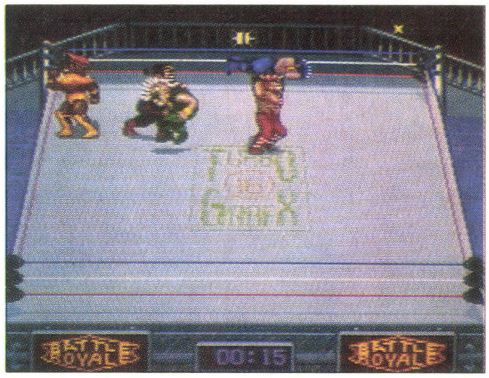
NEC

For the TurboGrafx-16 ($61.99)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	**5**	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10

Battle Royale is a wrestling contest that allows up to five wrestlers (via the TurboTap) to kick, punch and slam each other around and out of the ring. Matches may be played either as one-on-one confrontations (tournament mode) or as a free-for-all, with up to five human or computer-controlled wrestlers (non-tournament mode). A TV announcer greets players with a menu of game choices for the BRAWL, Battle Royale of America Wrestling League.

The action begins when each player takes control of a wrestling manager and prepares to choose the wrestler that they want to represent for the upcoming matches. Sumo Master, Executioner, Mongo Kahn, Spitfire Spike and Meateater are the five professionals available for battle. Choice of who gets what wrestler is a battle in itself. The managers are lined up in a locker room, and after a short countdown, the race is on. Each manager must alternately punch at the others while trying to make it to their favorite wrestler.



NEC takes the popular wrestling theme and allows up to five players to cut loose in the squared circle in *Battle Royale* for the TurboGrafx-16.

Once each player has chosen a champion, the serious action commences. Each wrestler has an arsenal of seven different moves that may be used to pummel the opponents. Buttons I and II and **SELECT** are used in different combinations to produce two high moves, two middle moves and two low moves. The last is a special move that may only be used once every five seconds. The moves vary for each wrestler and may include any variety of punches, belly slaps or kicks.

Each player has a limited amount of damage that he may take before the wrestler slows and weakens. Some strength returns if the player moves away from the conflict and avoids battle, but to speed up recovery, a limited amount of energy recharges are available, with the number depending upon which of the three difficulty levels was chosen.

It's easy to see how your wrestler is holding out. Each has a wrist band that changes color according to their energy level. Four different colors indicate one-quarter to full strength. Each wrestler is rated in four statistics: hit strength, hit speed, walk speed and recovery rate. A rank of 1 to 5 is given for each, with each wrestler having different strength and weaknesses compared with the others.

The point of the contest is to throw all of your opponents out of the ring while avoiding flying out yourself. While outside the ring, you may continue fighting others, both inside and out, and continue earning prize money.

Once there is a victor (an instant replay is shown of the final throw), players proceed to a statistics screen that shows how much money has been earned by each player for that round, how many hits were given, and how

many were taken. Bonus cash is awarded according to how many special hits you threw, how long you lasted in the ring and how quickly the round was ended. When in the nontournament mode, players can go as many rounds as they want, but the tournament mode allows only a limited number of rematches if your player loses.

Battle Royale was designed with multiplayer fun in mind and is geared mainly in that direction. While there is plenty of wrestling action to be had in the tournament mode, the most enjoyment comes when you have two or more players going at it full blast in the ring. Visually the game has its ups and downs. The screen shots of the managers before a match and the aftermatch gloating sessions of the wrestlers are great, but the graphics during the matches don't compare. The wrestlers themselves look okay, but the animation is jerky. The sound effects are enjoyable, from the grunts, groans and slaps, to the guttural "You die!" threats, it all helps establish the right atmosphere.

Battle Royale will be enjoyed most by wrestling enthusiasts with enough players to fill the ring, but it may appeal less to other players.

—B. W.

NEC Home Electronics, Inc.
1255 Michael Drive
Wood Dale, IL 60191-1094
(708) 860-9500

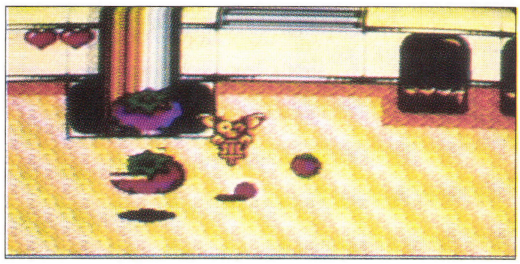
Gremlins II

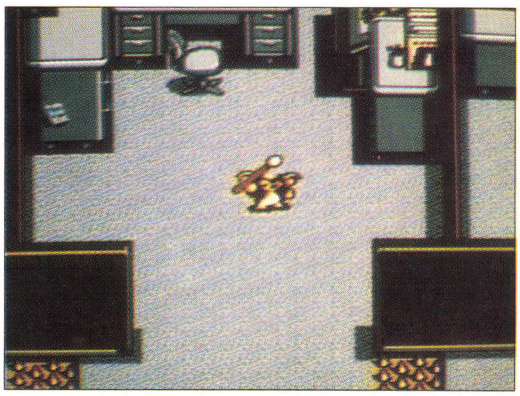
SUNSOFT

For the Nintendo Entertainment System ($47.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10

What's small, furry and cute, should be kept away from water and sunlight and must *never* be removed from the slot while the power is on? It's *Gremlins II*, based loosely on the summer film. And like the film, the game is a pleasant surprise...a lot of clever twists, cinematic graphics and—the biggest rarity of all—an exceptionally appealing hero. There's a dichotomy in the game, though: Its biggest appeal will probably be for children who love the characters, but it's a difficult game and may frustrate its intended audience.





***Gremlins II* is another successful porting of a film to a video game by Sunsoft, and it will challenge the most serious players with its high level of game play.**

The game starts out with an animated prologue. Gizmo, the warm fuzzy Mogwai with puppy-dog eyes, is trapped in a cage in the genetics lab of the Clamp Plaza. Zach Galligan, in what must be his first appearance in an NES cartridge, frees Gizmo and takes him to his cubicle elsewhere in the building. From there, Gizmo must travel through various levels of the building to the control center of the Plaza, there to meet his destiny. En route, he'll face various creatures bent on his destruction; evil Gremlins (mostly), security devices and other obstacles.

There are five levels in the game, most of which have two separate areas, for a total of nine stages. A four-letter password lets you continue at whatever level you left off; if you lose your last life in Area 2-2, for instance, you can pick up at the beginning of 2-2 next time you play. However, I found that some areas are incredibly tough unless you purposefully start at an earlier level and strengthen your resources. At the end of each level, you get a new offensive weapon automatically.

As in most games, the hero has a life supply, here represented by a row of hearts. As you take hits, the hearts shrink and vanish. Lose your entire row of hearts, and Gizmo spins around and vanishes convincingly in a puff of smoke.

There are a few ways to prolong your life. In each level (though you may have to search an out-of-the-way branch of the area to find it) is an entrance to Mr. Wing's shop. Here you can buy any one of the items he has to offer: balloons to

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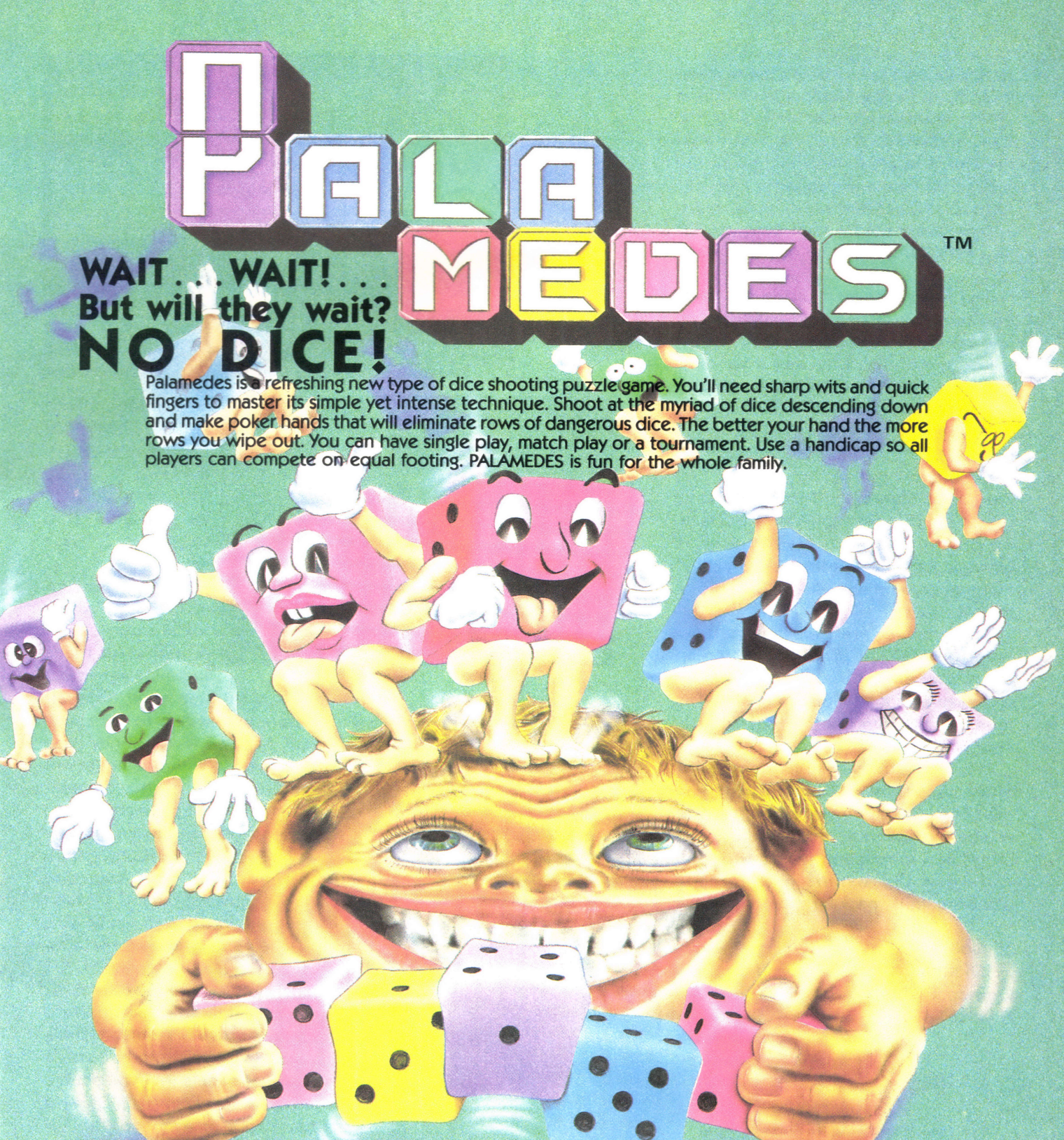

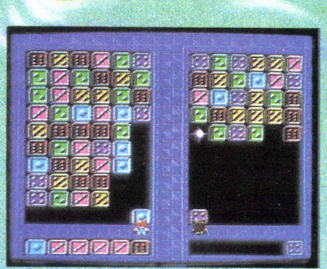

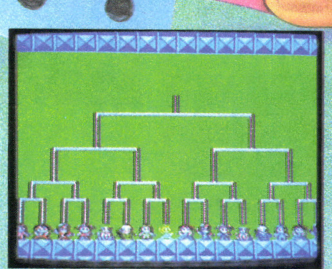

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1255 Post St., Suite 1040, San Francisco, CA 94109 (415) 567-9501

CIRCLE #136 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

save you from falling down the bottomless pits in Clamp Plaza, a life-restoring potion to replenish your dwindling lifeline, a weapon power-up, additional lives or a heart (which increases the number of hearts in your row). You pay the cost of these items in crystals, which appear momentarily each time you kill an enemy and must be quickly picked up.

The frustrating part of the Mr. Wing Purchase Plan is that he'll only sell you one item from his selection; you're then tossed out of the shop, and it vanishes until the next area. So although you may have accumulated huge numbers of crystals, they won't do you much good.

Gremlins II gets nasty after the first couple of levels. Children who love Gizmo (who appears animated in close-up during the plot-moving scenes between each level) may be stymied by the quantity and complexity of some of the puzzles.

The graphics are excellent, particularly for licensed products, which so often appear to be rushed to market with insufficient attention to quality. The music is also varied and sufficiently exciting.

While Gizmo may be too cute for older players to stomach, those who pass this one by may be doing themselves a disservice; there are a lot of tough and interesting twists here that will keep the experienced arcade gamers coming back for more.

—J. M.

Sunsoft
11165 Knott Avd., Suites A and B
Cypress, CA 90630
(714) 891-4500

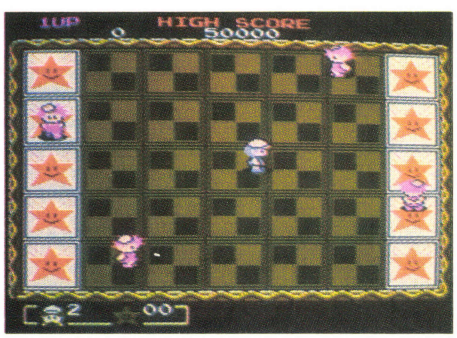
Mendel Palace

HUDSON SOFT
For the Nintendo Entertainment System ($49.99)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	**5**	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	**5**	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10

Who would have ever believed the hazards one can run into when sleeping! In *Mendel Palace* from Hudson Soft, your best friend, Candy, has fallen

In one of the strangest premises for a video game yet to date, Hudson Soft's *Mendel Palace* sets you out on the trail of your best friend Candy's kidnappers, her toy dolls.



into a deep sleep, and her dolls have taken her prisoner. It seems that they have come to life in her dreams and refuse to let her awaken.

As Bon-Bon (somebody's sweet tooth must have dreamed up these names), you must fight your way through eight different houses before proceeding to the castle itself, which has two levels. Since each area has 10 rounds within it, there are 100 different screens to conquer in order to rescue Candy. An extra Mendel Palace is also present and can be accessed by holding down **START** and **SELECT** before turning on the game. In this second game, you will proceed directly through 100 different rounds and will not be able to choose when and where you want to proceed.

The manner in which the dolls must be defeated is a departure from the normal blasting and hacking. Each screen is made up of a 5x7 grid of panels that you shuffle in order to knock an enemy against either a rock or wall and thus kill them. Each section of the grid may have anywhere from two to six different panels that can contain different objects. Stars are the most common object, and for every 100, your player's speed increases, and you are awarded an extra man. There are also panels that, when exposed, give birth to more enemies, as well as a "roulette" panel that switches between awards of stars, points and a 1-Up, depending on

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Battle Map

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2) What famous gang defeated the evil minister Gao Qiu and restored peace to the Song Empire?
(a) Hole in the Wall Gang (b) Bandit Kings of Ancient China (c) Gang of Four
3) What was the epic describing the power struggle at the end of China's second Han Dynasty called?
(a) Romance of the Three Kingdoms (b) I Ching (c) Godzilla
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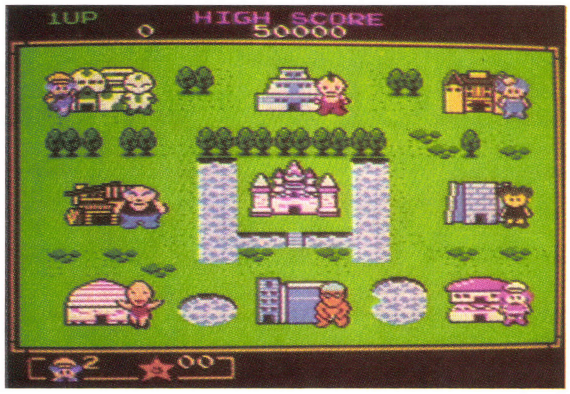
when it is grabbed.

Other panels are useful for attacking enemies either directly in your path, or anywhere on the screen, because they send a wave of shuffles that will throw all enemies in their path against the walls. Special bonus rooms and bonus stars are also hidden under some panels. A time limit exists for some rooms, but a special panel is available that will increase your time by five seconds in some rounds. If the time runs out, the enemies speed up drastically and become much more aggressive. In addition to the normal panels for a round, there are 14 others in all, some useful to you, others meant to slow you down.



There are basically eight different dolls to contend with, each controlling its own house. Each doll is quite unique and presents a different challenge. Uni-horned critters called moko-mokos are easy to beat and make an obvious target as they roam about the room. Others have a much different style of attack.

The Vinci dolls draw pictures of themselves on the panels, and if they're allowed to complete one, the panel is rendered useless (it may not be shuffled), and the drawing springs to life and joins in the attack! Heavy, foot-stomping sumos send you flying across the panels, and happily spinning takos frown sadly when knocked to the floor.

Although there are always items that may be collected in each room, destroying the dolls is all that you must do to advance. Once the tenth room of a house is reached (or every ten rounds in the extra version), a boss doll must be defeated before choosing the next doll house to take on.

One or two players may compete, competitively or cooperatively, in saving Candy. Unlimited continues are available, so anyone should be able to rescue Candy with patience. While there are definitely some rounds that will take a bit of searching and thinking to figure out, the average player should be able to finish the first game in under two and a half hours, less if playing two-player cooperatively. The extra version is much more difficult and will take longer.

A wild takeoff from the *Breakout/Arkanoid* theme, NEC's *Drop Off* has weirdly growing vines on-screen, with such items as lips and apples trying to hit the ball you're batting at them.

Graphically, the game comes across as bland and simple, without much changing from room to room other than the panels. Musical themes are different for each house, but are otherwise unremarkable.

Mendel Palace provides some enjoyment and challenge when played for the first time, but once the rooms are solved and the game is finished, there probably isn't much to hold the interest of most players. Younger players will get more out of the first version, and older players won't have to work until the extra version.

—B. W.

Hudson Soft USA, Inc.
400 Oyster Point Blvd., S-515
South San Francisco, CA 94080
(415) 495-4468

Drop Off

NEC

For the TurboGrafx-16 ($48.99)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	**4**	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	**4**	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	**5**	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	**4**	5	6	7	8	9	10

Picture, if you will, a multibranched vine full of not only fruits such as apples, watermelons and strawberries, but also such items as amoebas, lips and brains. Got it? Okay, now picture a game where these vines slowly lower

toward the bottom of the screen to where a small blue globe awaits. Your

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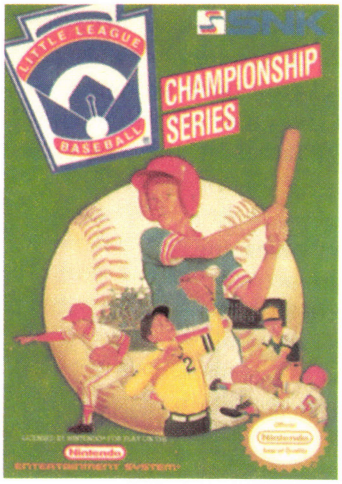

You are in full control of your players: Jump or dive for a tricky catch . . . Choose a full swing or a bunt for your batter . . . Shift fielders at will . . . Send in a pinch hitter or runner . . . Select a fast ball, slow ball, or curve ball for your pitcher . . . Steal a base if you dare . . . Or you might even try a squeeze play!

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WHEN the Great War brought civilization as we know it to an end, it ushered in a new era of sorcery and magic. The magicians used their magic to keep peace for a hundred years . . . Until an evil magician named Draygon began to use his powers for conquest.

To combat Draygon, the other magicians constructed four swords of wind, fire, water, and thunder. Used together, they would transform into the mightiest weapon ever created: Crystalis. But Draygon seized the weapons and scattered them far and wide.

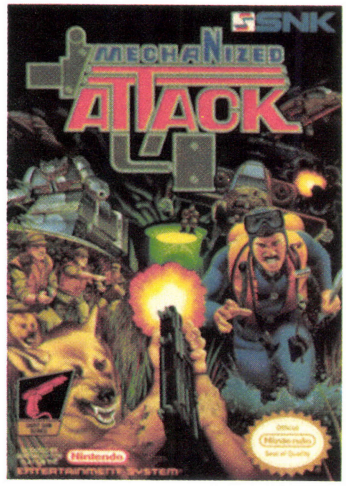
Only one hope remained: A young lad, himself a great magician, who had been imprisoned and frozen during the Great War. The magicians pooled all of their powers in an attempt to revive him. When the boy awoke, they had vanished, leaving him to find his destiny in this strange new world.

In CRYSTALIS, you play the role of the young magician, making your way through Draygon's hostile land in an effort to locate the weapons you will need to defeat him. Draygon's monsters and black magic will threaten you at every turn; but you must not falter — only you can deliver the world from his scourge of evil!

Mechanized Attack

AT FIRST, it looked like just another revolution. But reports have come in that the rebel forces are backed by an unusual array of high-tech weaponry — and that the rebel soldiers may actually be a fearsome new breed of fighting robots! If this revolution succeeds, the safety of the entire world may be threatened . . . And that's where you come in.

You must attempt to infiltrate the island base of the rebel forces. But before you even reach the shore, you'll have to contend with enemy gunboats, frogmen, choppers, and destroyers. The island itself is patrolled by enemy soldiers armed with machine guns, daggers and grenades; vicious attack dogs; and lethal airborne probes, programmed to destroy intruders on sight. And if you reach the rebel headquarters, you will face the most terrifying threat of all — only no one has made it back to reveal its nature.



Many unknown dangers lie in wait, but you'll be equipped with a complete arsenal — an assault gun, rocket launcher and grenades — to provide you with a fully mechanized system of attack. You haven't got a minute to waste — it's time to launch your MECHANIZED ATTACK!

Dexterity

DEXTER DOLITTLE has an amazing imagination! He can imagine himself to be anywhere he would like — including his many magic puzzle rooms.

Guide Dexter on his merry way as he jumps from tile to tile, flipping them over — while he dodges, blocks, and captures captivating characters of all shapes and sizes. Some of his magic puzzle friends can be changed into fabulous fruits. Find the hourglass, hammer, and magic heart to gain bonus points and extra imaginary rooms. But watch out for the scary skull, which can stop Dexter short before he finds the delectably delicious ice cream worth 5000 points!

You won't find more fun and fantastic haphazards in any other Game Boy cartridge as you will in these 30 nimble-fingered, fast-paced rounds of Dexter's dubious imagination.

So find the magical key to unlock the door to not only Dexter's, but your own wonderful imagination!

SNK

SNK Corporation of America
246 Sobrante Way
Sunnyvale, California 94086

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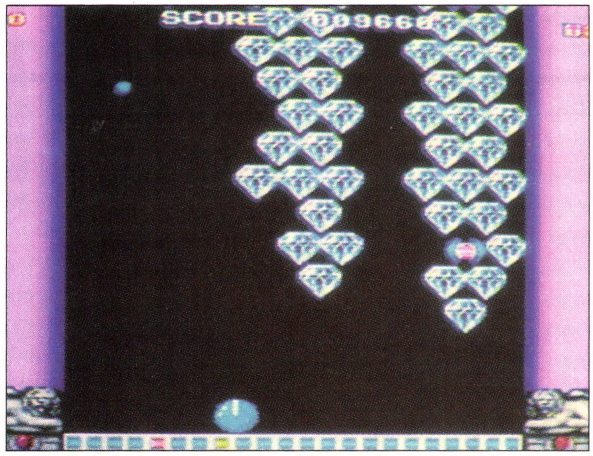
task? To destroy the objects with a small ball that you can bounce upward at two different angles.

The description above will make much more sense than the storyline, which tells of how you, as Takashi, must save your girlfriend, Izumi, from an evil spirit that has inhabited her dream and won't let her awaken.

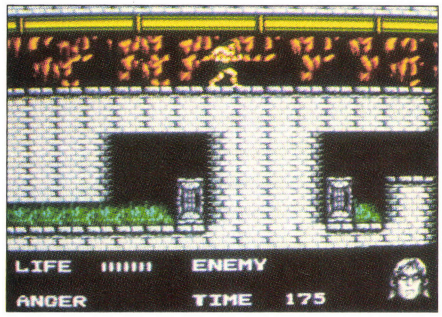


In *Drop Off* for the TurboGrafx-16, you can hit the items one by one or, for a larger bonus, "cut" the vine above a string of objects, dropping them to the floor below.

While the *Breakout/Arkanoid* theme is not new, a few new twists make *Drop Off* different. In most other games with a similar theme, each of the blocks or objects must be hit in order to destroy them. In *Drop Off*, however, if you can thin out an area higher up on the vine and knock out the object by which the rest are suspended, the entire bunch will fall, awarding extra points. But there's a catch! To get points for any of the items you knock out, you must have hit the ball immediately before it struck the object. This is because, unlike other games, you can miss the ball without losing it. There is either a bar all the way across the bottom or a series of bricks that must be hit several times before they'll allow the ball to escape.

When the ball is hit by your globe, it will turn blue and will remain blue as long as you continue to hit it. Any items that fall to the bottom will not harm you as long as your ball was blue when the items were struck. If you miss the ball and it falls to the bottom, it will change to red, and any falling items will kill your globe if it is hit. Your globe will also die if you run into any of the objects while they are still connected to the vines or if the ball does escape through the bottom of the screen.

Data East's *Werewolf, The Last Warrior* is a tough NES game that, similar to Sega's *Altered Beast*, has you searching for items that will turn you into a strong battling werewolf.



An advantage over similar *Breakout*-type games is that your globe is able to move anywhere on the screen, instead of being limited to the bottom. At the beginning of the round, you are given three "arrows" that allow you to raise the objects back up toward the top of the screen if things start getting out of control. Additional arrows may be acquired by hitting special objects mixed in among the others. Other special items include invulnerability, a halt item that temporarily stops the objects' march down the screen, an iron-wall item that prevents the ball from escaping through the bottom of the screen and 1-Ups. There are 15 different screens of objects to be dealt with as described above, plus a final round where you must defeat the evil spirit boss to end the game.

If an award was given for the weakest link between the storyline and the game, *Drop Off* would take it easily. The boss spirit is easily identified as such, but referring to vines of apples, lips and rosaries as "horrible demons" just isn't going to cut it. The grammar within the game intro is ridiculous! Get this: "It's a sweet fruit, from which her dream, just such a dream as a girl would have, begun." The game is fairly challenging, with only three continues possible, but it isn't interesting, nor does it entice one to make an effort to finish it. If you are absolutely ravenous for some kind of fruit-bashing game on the TurboGrafx-16, give this a look, otherwise *Drop Off* comes off the vine as a rotten apple.

—B. W.

NEC Home Electronics, Inc.
1255 Michael Drive
Wood Dale, IL 60191-1094
(708) 860-9500

Werewolf, The Last Warrior

DATA EAST

For the Nintendo Entertainment System ($49.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	**4**	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10

When a game contains only five levels, you know right off that you're in for a tough time. You see, game designers want their video masterpieces to last a

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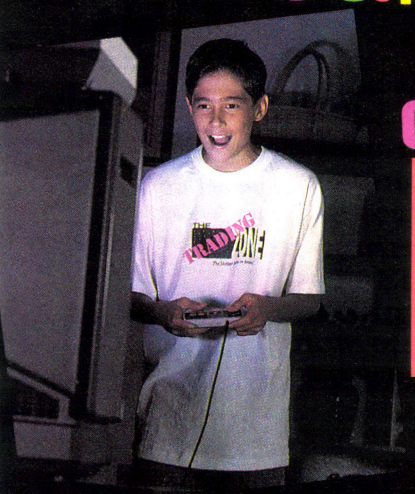

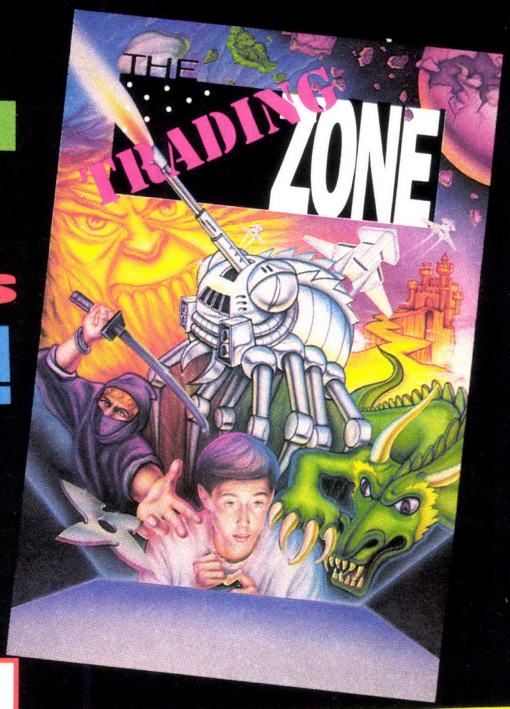

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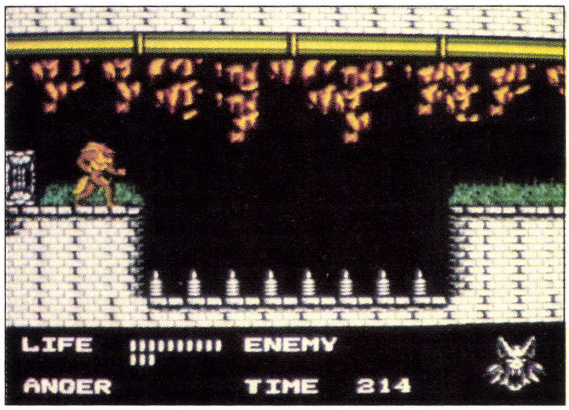
CIRCLE #139 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

minimum number of hours. They have two ways of doing this: creating a large number of levels, or making a fewer number of levels last longer by increasing the game's difficulty. If you ask me, the latter method is the cheap way out. The game designer gets off inventing fewer scenes, which cuts down tremendously on the research and development cost of the game. Of course, the consumer then picks up the tab, by playing the same level over and over and over and....



Werewolf, The Last Warrior is a short game (five levels), so, of course, it's tough. You play the part of War Wolf, a strange individual with the power to mutate into two different werewolf forms. War Wolf has set off to destroy a baddy named Faryan, who is the head honcho of New World, a place with wall-to-wall goons.

Essentially, *Werewolf* is a simple and uninspired punch-and-slice contest, with only a couple of extras thrown in to make it even slightly interesting. Those extras include a red "W," which changes you into a werewolf; power bubbles, which change you into a super werewolf; a blue "W," which forces you back into human form and takes away life points; red power bubbles, which, when picked up, destroy everything on the screen; giant power bubbles, which make you temporarily invincible; and hearts, which restore your life points. Other special items reset the timer, award bonus points or offer you 1-Ups.

In most battles, you use your fists (when in human form) or large knives (when in werewolf form). However, the power ray, which is activated by holding down the "A" button, provides extra offensive power.

When in human form, you have only limited movement capabilities: You can run or jump. But when in werewolf form, you can climb walls and ceilings, jump higher and perform various flips and spins. The controls, however, are clumsy, mostly because the designers decided to make the "B" button the jump button and the "A" button the fire button, just the opposite of the user interface for most every other NES game on the market. Dumb.

Another design flaw becomes apparent whenever you lose your werewolf form in a location from which your human form can't escape. Nothing to do but wait for the timer to run out, a process that could take as much as three minutes. Yawn.

On the positive side, the graphics are complex and detailed, with some levels boasting luscious backgrounds. The music, also, is a step above par, with catchy tunes and well-programmed sound.

In summary, *Werewolf, The Last Warrior* is only half a game. Whatever pleasure may be found is lost because of the frustrating controls. (Game developers: Never, *NEVER* switch the standard functions of the "A" and "B" buttons, unless you like angry customers.) Buy it if you like, but don't be surprised if you're left howling at the moon.

—Clayton Walnum

Data East
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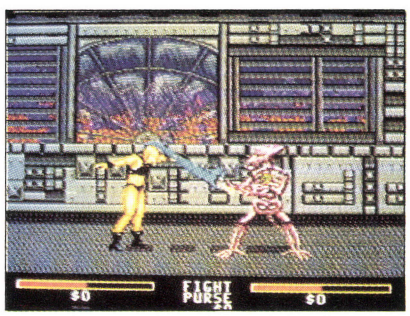

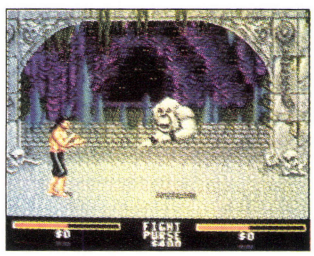

Brought over from the computer-game realm, where it was called *Tongue of the Fatman*, to the Genesis, *Mondu's Fight Palace* pits you against alien creatures in a head-to-head fight to the death.

Mondu's Fight Palace

ACTIVISION

For the Sega Genesis ($49.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10

Feeling feisty? Looking to tan some alien hide? Wanna get into a brawl with every lumpy, misshapen freak in the *Star Wars* cantina? Then your obvious destination is *Mondu's Fight Palace*. Even the big boss himself, Mondu the Fat, could pass for Jabba the Hutt if you closed your eyes and squeezed.

Mondu's Fight Palace is a reworking of Activision's computer game *Tongue of the Fatman*, and the game is largely the same (although my favorite alien has been removed from the Genesis version). This is a tournament between alien races, where you go head-to-glob against 16 competitors. There are eight different species of aliens, two creatures

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SEGA GENESIS

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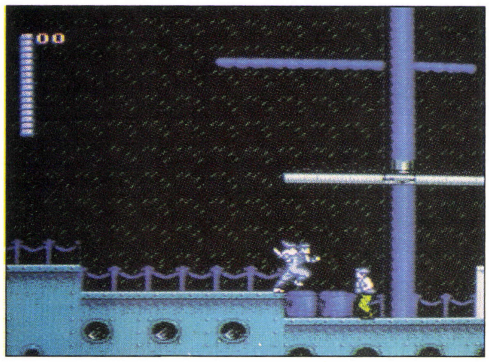
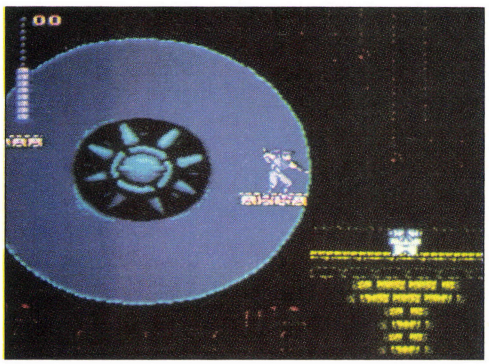
of each species, each with their own methods of attack...plus there's Mondu himself, who you'll get to battle if you make it past all the others.

Your ability to put on a wild show directly affects the kind of cash purse you take home with you. The closer the fight, the more the game is worth. Provided you win (lose three rounds and you're shark bait), you can apply the purse toward strengthening your arsenal of offensive and defensive capabilities.

Those capabilities take various forms. Each alien is capable of at least a dozen moves—low, medium, high and jumping kicks; ducks; leaps and turnarounds. Each also has an individualized bonus attack skill; for example, Edwina and Sheba, two punk-rock babes, can whip their mohawks with devastating results. And Mondu's enormous, flabby belly unfolds to reveal a giant mouth with a tongue that can flick you across the arena.

Shadow of the Ninja, a high-quality martial-arts contest for the NES, marks the much-anticipated entry of Natsume to the video-game scene in America.





You can also use your winnings to purchase magic weapons (each of which can be used only once, briefly). There are 12 different magics, of various strengths and corresponding prices. You can use up to four in any one fight, provided you have the bucks to buy them. You can also spend money to raise your stamina and attack strength before a fight.

Besides seeing alien scum dropping like giant flies before your awesome power, you get to see the losers gobbled up by a land shark, who swims around at the end of each fight to "clean up" (though he inevitably leaves a splatter of blood or ichor behind).

Once you've proven yourself by besting a few of the contenders, Mondu will start rewarding you with secret codes. You can use these codes to play the game as one of the aliens (rather than the default humanoid you usually get).

All of this is accomplished in a splashy sound and light show. Mondu opens the game with a scratchy digitized welcome, but once the game starts, the punches, grunts, crunches and screams fly, some of which are startlingly realistic. An eerie music track runs in the background. The fight palaces, of which there are several, are nicely done, with scrolling backgrounds and multilevel floors, which add an illusion of solidity.

My complaints are petty: When standing after a fall, your fighter invariably faces in the wrong direction. In addition, there are times when, if you're playing a certain character, you can corner another character and finish him off with a single repeated attack. And after all the battling to get Mondu's code, he was a pretty sluggish fighter!

Despite these minor glitches, *Mondu's Fight Palace* has much to recommend it, including great graphics, a complicated and challenging combat system and a head-to-head mode for two players. Kudos to Activision for improving upon the original computer game. It's right at home on the Genesis, where the animation can really shine.

—J. M.

Activision
3885 Bohannon Drive
Menlo Park, CA 94025
(415) 329-0800

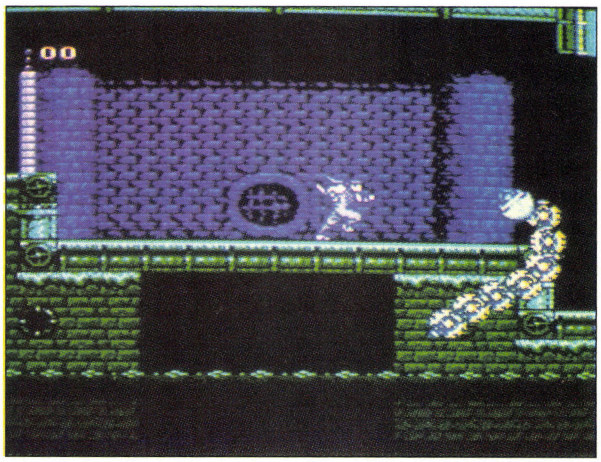
Shadow of the Ninja

NATSUME

For the Nintendo Entertainment System ($44.99)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

By the time *Shadow of the Ninja* reaches store shelves, there will be nearly a dozen NES games with the word "ninja" in the title—not to mention the countless other games that feature ninjas prominently. With such a large number of martial-arts contests already on the market, how can anyone get excited about yet another ninja adventure?



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... Nearly blacked out, you ease forward on the stick. The g's drop, and you can see again. There he is! You're on HIS six now. This is going to be sweet. As you get tone you know he's yours.

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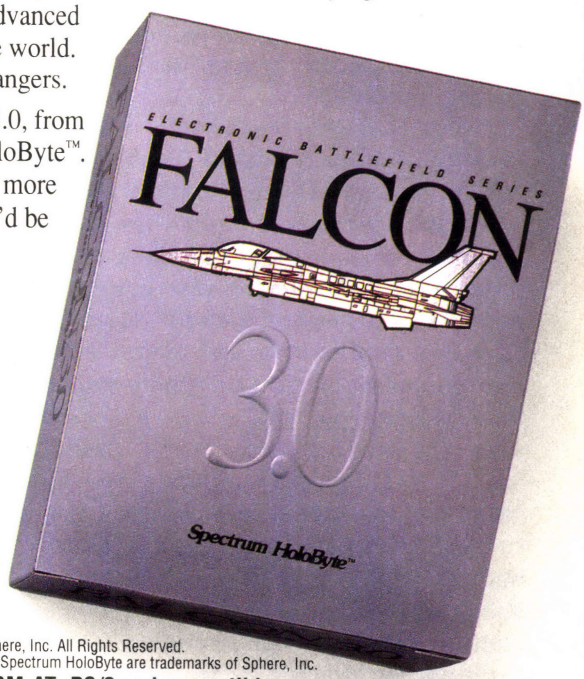

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CIRCLE #141 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

released this year or any year. Even if you've grown weary of the genre, you'll find it hard to deny that *Shadow of the Ninja* is a work of art. If this game doesn't get your heart pounding and your adrenaline flowing, then you're either very jaded or very dead.

Created in large part by a team of veteran designers who sharpened their skills on early Konami titles like *Contra* and *Top Gun*, this epic tells the tale of the evil Emperor Garuda and his 21st-century takeover of New York City. His only serious opposition comes in the form of two warriors of the Iga clan. Fighting alone as Hayate, or with the help of Lady Kaede in the two-player cooperative mode, you must breach the city's defenses and fight through five levels of gritty action before taking on Garuda in his lair. Hmmm...a female ninja? Great idea, but the unmistakably feminine warrior shown in the game's advertisements is reduced to an androgynous face on the "player select" screen, and during the actual game, Kaede can't be distinguished from Hayate except for the color of her clothing.

The *Contra* influence is readily apparent; for example, the music uses similar tempos and percussion sounds, and the two-player mode is immediately reminiscent of that title. There is some flickering and slowness in the busier areas of the game, but the overwhelming intensity of the action makes these flaws barely noticeable.

From the sharply detailed backgrounds to the digitized "YAH!" and "OOF!" sound effects, *Shadow of the Ninja* is a sensory delight that rivals many 16-bit games for pure video-game entertainment. And it's interesting to note that this awesome audio-visual assault has reportedly been created *without* the use of Nintendo's highly touted MMC technology.

In addition to the usual run/jump/slash play mechanics, the game includes some less-common features that are sure to keep players hooked. Most interesting is the ninjas' ability to jump up and cling to moving platforms and ceilings in certain areas. Once you've attached yourself this way, you can flip yourself up to the top of the surface you're hanging from, and back down again. This simple feature opens up a whole new realm of strategic possibilities in many areas.

The game also includes many hidden bonus items that aren't mentioned in the instruction manual. Some of these power-ups can increase the "reach" of your weapons, and certain others allow you to drop powerful bombs on your enemies. Spectacular boss characters are the icing on the cake, and a number of false endings and surprise twists are also to be found.

Though *Shadow of the Ninja* is an extremely tough game, it doesn't start out that way; there's a fair progression of difficulty from the earlier levels to the supreme challenge of battling Garuda. The game's biggest flaw is the familiar nature of its martial-arts storyline.

As an entertainment medium, video games are just as legitimate as books or movies, and there's no reason why the subject matter should be limited to spaceships, Ninjas and baseball. But Natsume shouldn't be criticized for bringing out "another ninja game," because *Shadow of the Ninja* is one of the best games of *any* genre.

—C. B.

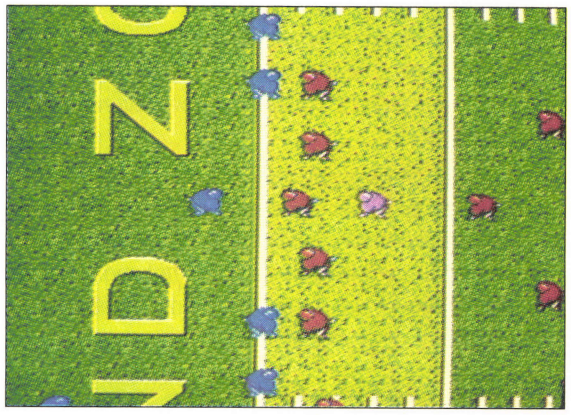
Natsume Inc.
1243A Howard Avenue
Burlingame, CA 94010
(415) 342-1712

Mike Ditka's Big Play Football

ACCOLADE

For the Nintendo Entertainment System ($49.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10



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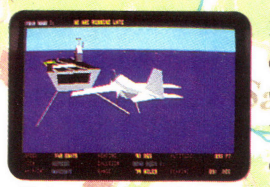

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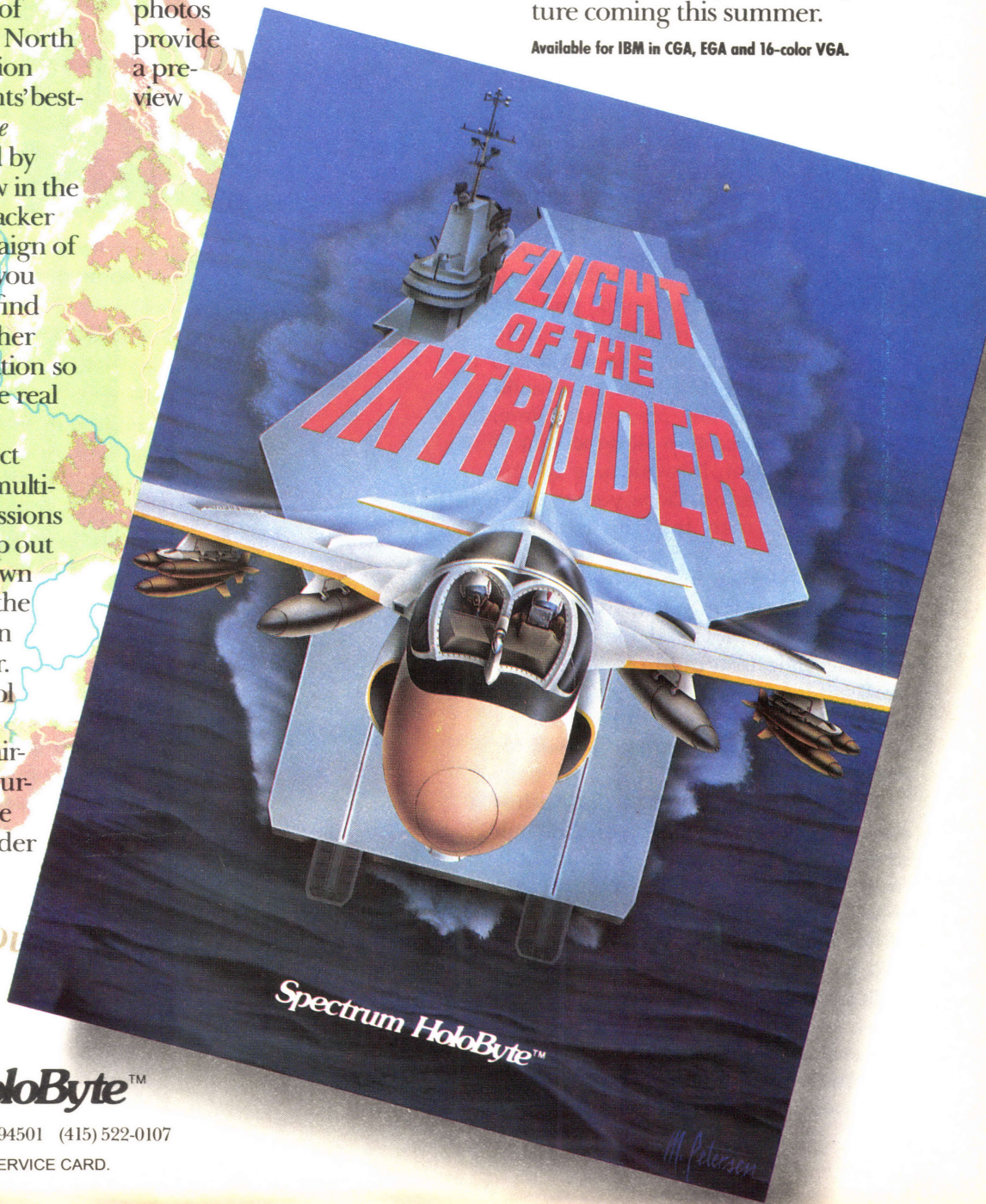

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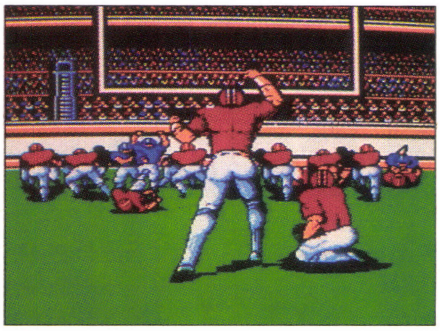
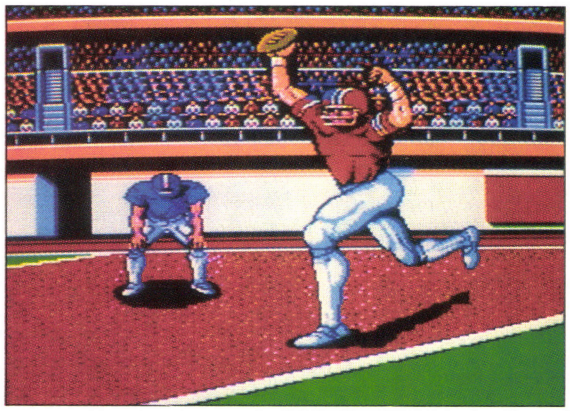
CIRCLE #142 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

Accolade's first entry into the NES market is a pigskin picnic that updates tried-and-true football action with a number of innovations. You want sophisticated play selection and formation options? You've got `em! You want penalties, injuries and player substitution? You've got those, too.



Unfortunately, you also get a number of things that you don't want, like fuzzy-looking players, annoying "flicker" and a passing game that's straight out of the *Twilight Zone*. In a fictitious league of six teams, you can challenge the computer or compete against another player. An enjoyable "two-players vs. computer" option is also available, as well as a coaching mode that lets you choose the plays and sit back to watch them unfold.



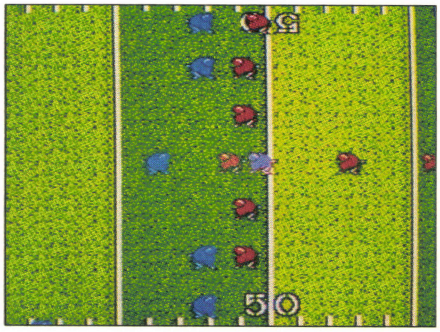
Accolade's *Mike Ditka's Big Play Football* brings the expertise of the Chicago Bears' coach to the NES.

Actually, the passing game is not flawed, it's just strange. When your quarterback takes the snap, you can freeze the action on the entire field while you cycle through your eligible receivers. As you check out your teammates' locations, one player at a time, the screen can scroll in all directions to give you a complete picture of the defensive formation. Once you've identified an open man, the pass is thrown and everyone starts moving again. It's nice to have an unlimited amount of time to choose a receiver; real-life NFL quarterbacks would need one heck of an offensive line in order to enjoy such a luxury. But having the ability to stop the action in the middle of a play seems inappropriate in a game that strives for realism in other areas.

The on-screen referee is another notable oddity: He's a three-foot-tall mutant with an oversized head and the most frightening pair of eyes I've seen since *The Exorcist*. Thankfully, the rest of the game is bolstered by great music and a number of screens that show "still photos" of tackles, player substitutions, extra-point conversions and a vicious dual face-mask penalty. The halftime show is pretty good, but it's overshadowed by a terrific pregame coin toss. Details like these can help to make or break a video game, and in this case they help to cover up some minor flaws that would have crippled the game if they had been more noticeable.

I was lucky enough to get a chance to ask Mike Ditka about his involvement with the game, and he echoed Accolade's claim that his input was used in the early stages of development. But he was honest enough to admit that his busy schedule doesn't allow much time for playing video games (most of his free time is spent playing golf), and that he hadn't seen the finished product as of mid-September. It's unfortunate that the designers didn't capitalize on Ditka's status as one of the NFL's most colorful personalities. I was expecting an occasional screen shot of the gum-chewing coach scowling on the sidelines behind a pair of dark sunglasses.

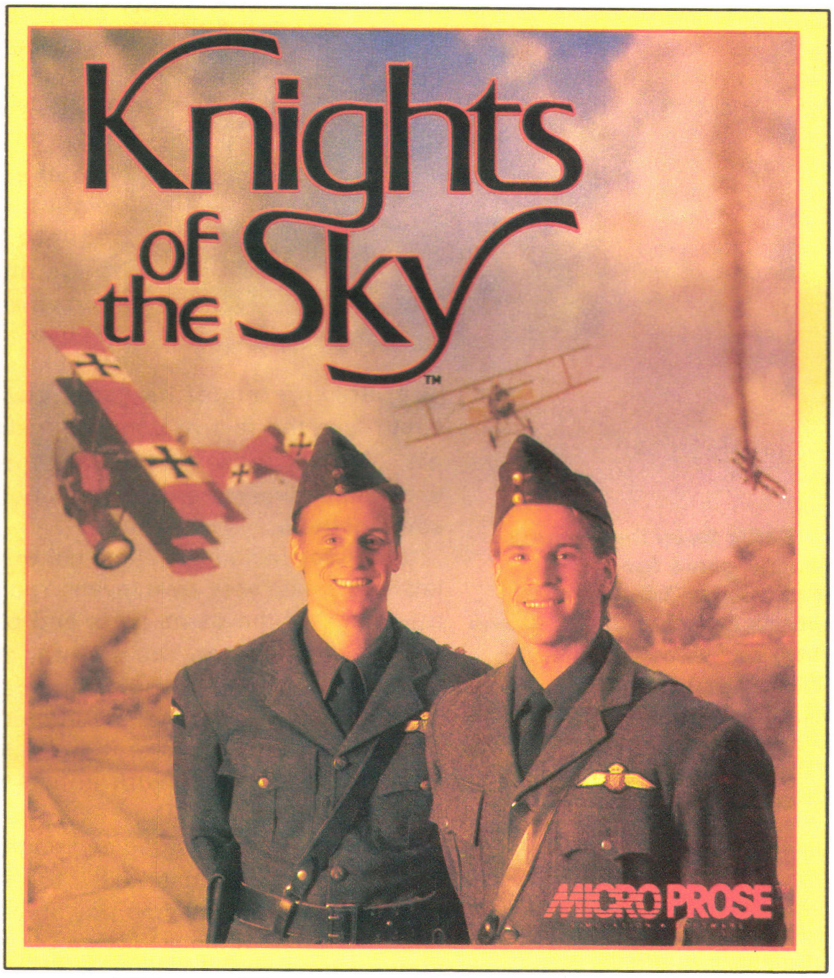
As a football fan, I felt misled by some of the finer details that weren't as



realistic as promised. As a native and resident Chicagoan, I was extremely disappointed that Ditka didn't have more of a presence in the game. But as a video-game player, I really enjoyed *Big Play Football*. It may not meet the standards set by *Tecmo Bowl* (a popular football title that's regarded by many gamers as the number-one NES sports simulation), but it's a lot of fun for folks who are looking for a contest that balances equal amounts of action and strategy. Now, about *Mike Ditka Golf*...

—C. B.

Accolade, Inc.
550 S. Winchester Blvd., Suite 200
San Jose, CA 95128
(408) 296-8400



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Flying without radar and at slightly less than the speed of sound, your dogfighting skills are more important than ever. Your opponents aren't just specks in the sky — you'll see them close-up, shake your fists at them, perhaps even salute their skill.

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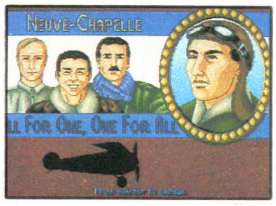
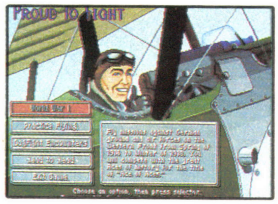
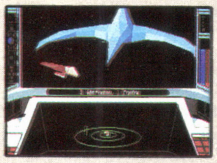




THE BEST OF THE FUTURE



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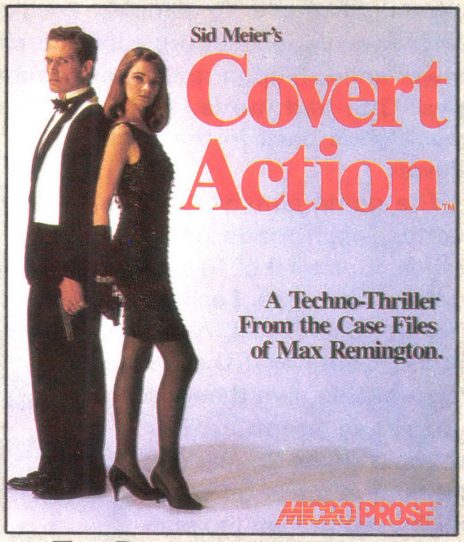

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CIRCLE #143 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

Boxy Boy

NEC

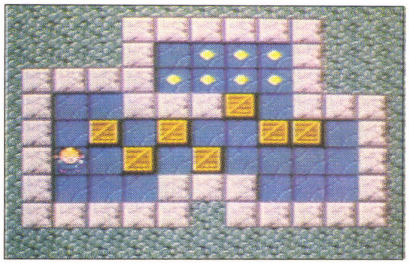
For the TurboGrafx-16 ($45.99)

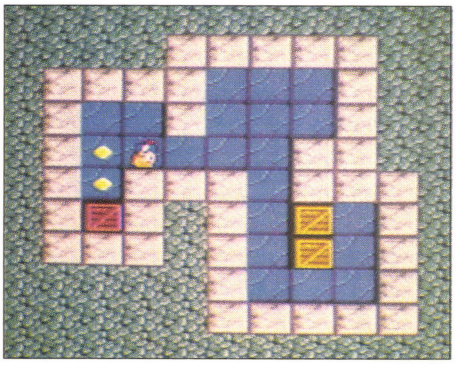
SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Welcome to the world of the blue-collar warehouse worker, where you slave to earn enough greenbacks to buy a motorcycle, a new car, a stereo or maybe a TV. The job sounds easy at first: Just yank a few crates onto the floor markers. But, man, who put all those walls in the way? And what about those narrow aisles? They actually expect you to work under these conditions?

Boxy Boy for the TurboGrafx-16 is one of those puzzle-type games that are all the rage these days. A simple contest, all you have to do is push crates around a room until they cover all the dots on the floor. Complications abound, of course. To complete each of the stages, you must burn a lot of brain power and call upon razor-sharp strategies. One bad move, and your paycheck goes back in the cash drawer.

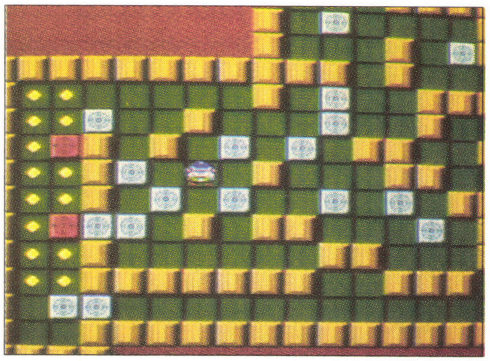
NEC's *Boxy Boy*, a new puzzle game for the TurboGrafx-16, picks up where *Boxxle* (for the Game Boy) and *Shove It!—The Warehouse Game* (for the Genesis) left off, pushing the player to place boxes in particular positions in the fewest moves possible.





The game consists of five worlds, each made up of 20 stages, for a total of 100 stages in the main game. Each of the five worlds—Japan, America, Egypt, China and the South Pole—has its own theme song and set of graphics. For example, in the South Pole, the floor is made up of ice blocks, rather than the blue bricks that form the floors in Japan.

You'll notice I said "main game" in the above paragraph. Although the manual doesn't mention them, there are actually many, many more stages than the aforementioned 100. As an experiment, I entered random passwords, trying to jump ahead to higher levels. (What a cheater!) By some miracle, I found a few valid ones. When I entered the password RIGHT, I ended up in stage 232! How many levels there may be beyond that point is simply anybody's best speculation.



The puzzles vary in size, from small areas eight blocks square to huge multi-screen areas 30 x 19 blocks in size. Solving one of the large puzzles could take the rest of your life, believe me. Most of these puzzles are tough, and you'll swear there's no solution to some of them.

Boxy Boy includes a stage editor that lets you create your own levels. You can select any of the game parts and place them anywhere on the screen, constructing a complete puzzle piece by piece. When your stage is complete, a play option lets you test it. You can't, however, save your work unless you have the TurboGrafx-CD.

Boxy Boy is challenging and engrossing at first. Unfortunately, it's too simplistic to have any staying power, being little more than a fancy version of those handheld puzzle games with the lettered tiles. Although the graphics change with each world, the screens are still made up of the same few basic parts.

If you like cerebral contests like *Tetris*, you'll probably get some good play time out of *Boxy Boy*. But I can't help thinking what a great game this could have been if the designers had gone the extra mile.

—C. W.

NEC Home Electronics, Inc.
1255 Michael Drive
Wood Dale, IL 60191-1094
(708) 860-9500

Tiger Road

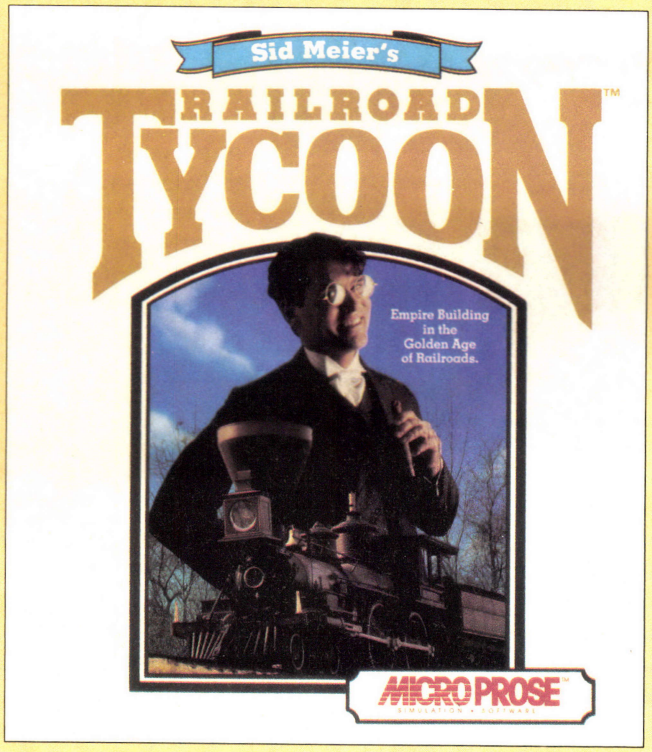
NEC

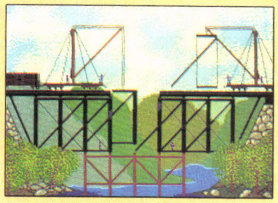
For the TurboGrafx-16 ($61.99)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Though it features a martial-arts storyline, NEC's *Tiger Road* doesn't include the type of chop-socky beat-'em-up

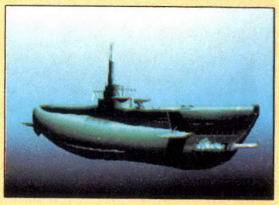
The Best of Times



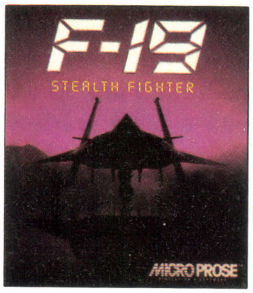


America's hot new best-seller takes you on a trip through the golden age of railroading in America and Europe. Compete with famous rail barons. Plan, build, operate, maintain and expand your railroad into a mighty industrial machine.

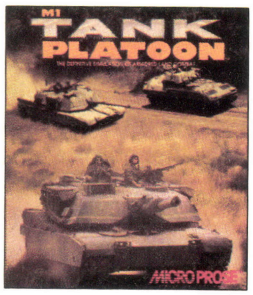
1990 brings phenomenal new graphics and game play to the World War II submarine game that won Simulation of the Year honors around the world in 1986. Stalk Japanese ships through the Pacific from Pearl Harbor to VJ Day.



Now for Amiga!

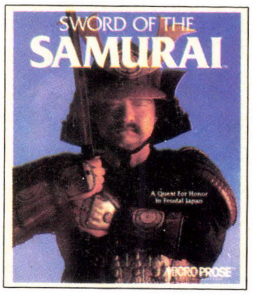


The Software Publishers Association named this one Simulation of the Year. Engrossing game play. Fascinating strategies. Revolutionary graphics. Based on America's radar-elusive jet.

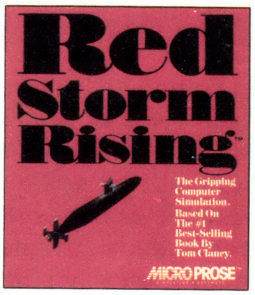


Command not just one tank, but a full platoon of four with controls so smooth they put single-tank games to shame. Call in jets, helicopters, artillery and infantry support, too.

Dogfighting is the name of this game. No experience? No problem: just turn on all the rookie options and you'll be up to your eyeballs in dazzling graphics and furious fun.



Discover the game that has the critics raving. Fight and scheme your way to power and prestige in a role-playing/action/adventure of war and politics in 16th Century Japan.



Take on shrewd Russian commanders in a gripping game of nuclear submarine strategy. Find and destroy the enemy with the latest sonar and weapons. Based on Tom Clancy's novel.

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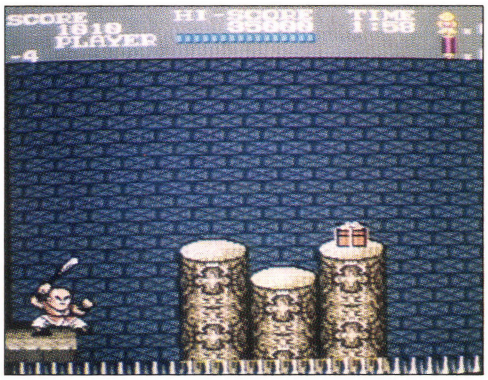
action that's characteristic of the genre. In fact, the game's bald-headed hero, Lee Wong, never uses his hands or feet to defend himself against the hordes of hooligans that hound him. The use of weaponry seems to have made hand-to-hand combat obsolete in Lee's world.

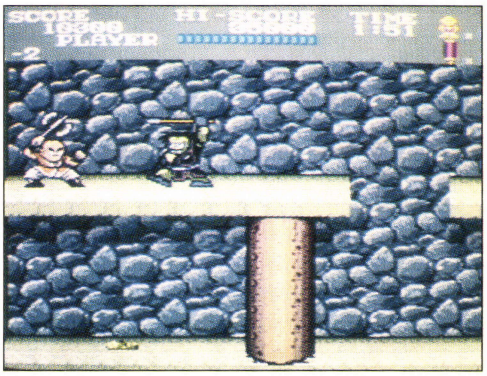
A master of the powerful "Oh-Lin Temple" boxing method, Lee must fight the dreaded Dragon God and rescue the villagers' kidnapped children. But before that bone-crushing bout can take place, Lee has to battle an army of kung-fu commandos and weird creatures that fight under the Dragon God's control. Five colorful levels set the stage for Lee's quest, which starts out as a simple axe-swinging affair and leads to a number of bigger, better battles. Some areas even allow Lee to float through the air like a hairless, silk-covered Clark Kent!

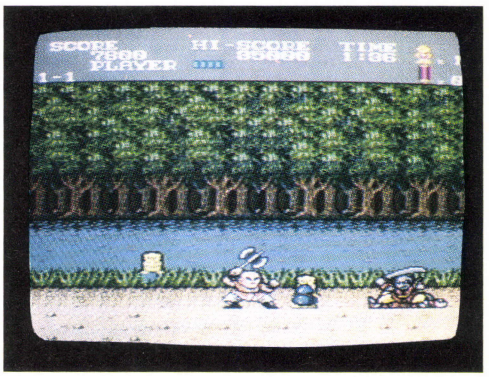
The action is quick and smooth, and the characters have a mildly cartoonish look that's starting to become a staple of TurboGrafx titles. But the decent graphics can't cover up some strange quirks



that limit the game's playability. For example, Lee seems to be completely outclassed by his enemies; most of the competition seem to have skills and special abilities that give them a tremendous advantage. And their timing is positively uncanny, particularly in Stage 3, where they get very good at knocking you into the trap doors that cost you a life.

The weapons Lee uses are also a point of controversy. You start the game with a sickle and chain, an awesome tool that allows you to cut a wide path through your opponents by swinging it in front of you. But the other weapons (a staff and a type of mace) are nearly useless: They don't reach as far as the sickle-and-chain arrangement does, and they have a narrow focus that drastically limits their effectiveness. Certain bonus items can increase the range of these weapons, but that proves to be a mixed blessing. Your enemies can only be harmed by the tip of each weapon, and a creature who jumps over your horizontal thrusts can stand right on top of you and grind you into hamburger while you frantically hack at thin air. Having a choice of weapons should have been a plus, but it's just the opposite—a lot of time is spent consciously avoiding these and other undesirable power-ups.





If you prefer games like *Legendary Axe* that require you to master the various weapons as you battle your way toward the end boss, NEC's *Tiger Road* is right up your alley.

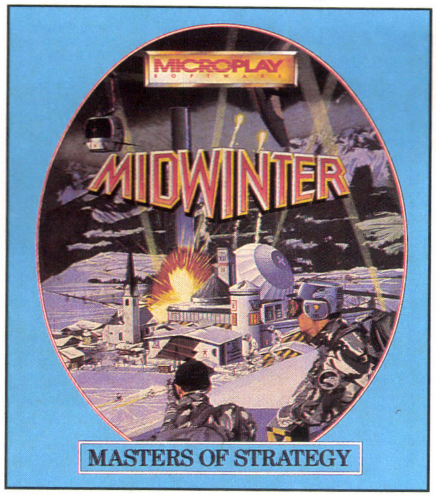
At the end of each level, you enter a training session with a wise Oh-Lin mentor. If you can snuff a candle with repeated swings of your sickle and chain, you gain extra power. (It takes a lot longer than you'd expect, but it's still a piece of cake if you use the TurboPad's built-in rapid-fire controls.) Other training sessions are more relevant, with a schoolful of "training monks" that attack Lee from both sides. After you pass the second of these tests, you will be taught the mysterious "Tiger Technique," though at this stage in the game it may be too late to try to liven things up with a bit of variety in the combat scheme.

If you're an NES owner who has never played a TurboGrafx-16 game, *Tiger Road* will impress you. But the repetitive action and monotonous music are not up to the standard set by some of NEC's earlier releases. If nothing else, this one deserves to be recognized as the most *average* game I've ever played. If there's a line between good games and bad games, *Tiger Road* balances on that line with the skill of a circus tightrope walker.

—C. B.

NEC Technologies, Inc.
1255 Michael Drive
Wood Dale, IL 60191-1094
(708) 860-9500

Three smart tactical decisions for your great strategic mind.



What if you flew your hang-glider north, got lucky enough to catch the afternoon updraft, made it to town, rallied your troops, and attacked the invaders just as they reached the narrowest part of the valley below?

The world is locked in a new ice age. A powerful enemy has invaded your small village to overtake your heat mines, your only source of heat and power.

A collection of mismatched citizens is the only army to oppose the invaders.

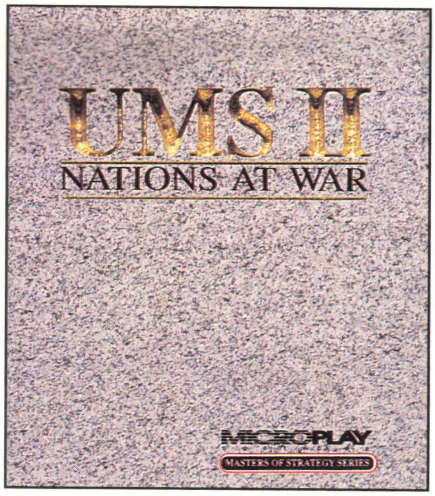
Innocent civilian equipment — skis, hang-gliders, snowmobiles and cable cars — suddenly become indispensable implements of war.

Manpower and equipment alone will never stop the enemy. Your community's only hope is superior strategy and leadership.

Strategy and leadership are up to you.

With 32 fully-developed characters, detailed maps of its 160,000 square mile playing zone, and fractal, light-sourced 3-D terrain, Midwinter is gigantic, innovative, unforgettable!

For Amiga, Atari ST, IBM-PC/compatibles.



What if Alexander the Great had fought Charlemagne?

What if Napoleon had brought more artillery to Waterloo?

What if a band of Indians attacked King Arthur's court?

UMS II is a sophisticated wargame construction kit that gives you absolute control of any military encounter you can imagine. You determine who fights, where, when, and with what equipment.

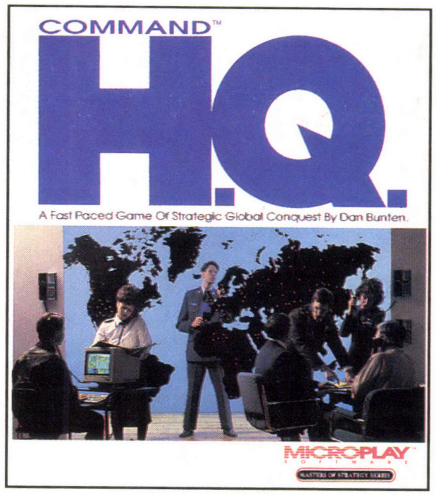
In fact, the guiding principle of UMS II is to let the player control everything, including the level of control he wants.

You can assemble a battle, watch it being fought, then tear it down and build it again with the changes you want. Maybe change the weather, maybe introduce hills instead of valleys, maybe give Custer a few thousand more men at Little Big Horn.

And you can see it all from any of four levels of zoom and magnification, from a global view of the whole campaign, down to a battle zone only 8 miles on a side.

UMS II is the most powerful tool a strategy wargamer can own.

For Amiga, Atari ST, IBM-PC/compatibles, Macintosh.



What if you give up on capturing your enemy's cities and try to shut down his oil fields instead?

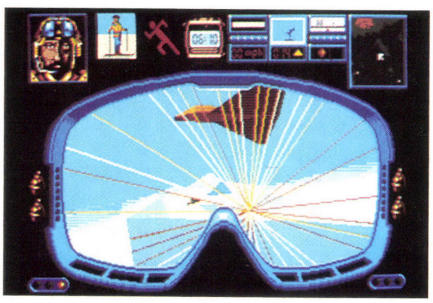
Command HQ is a wargame for the rest of us. Serious, but not too serious. Details, but not too many. You're the commander-in-chief; small questions are no concern of yours. When you move a plane, you're really moving hundreds of aircraft. When you place a soldier somewhere on the global map, you're deploying tens of thousands of troops.

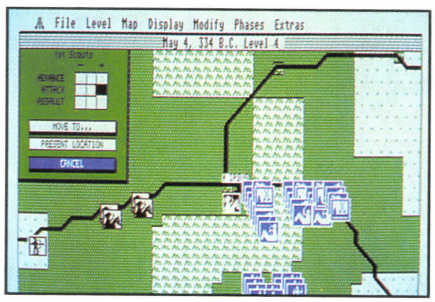
But when the conflict starts, an innovative animation window lets you see all the action as if you were right there on the front lines.

With its modem and direct connect capability, Command HQ lets you and a buddy send taunting messages back and forth as you maneuver to drive each other into submission. If your friend's not around, no problem... the shrewd computer opponent will give you all the action you can handle.

From Dan Bunten, award-winning designer of M.U.L.E. and Seven Cities of Gold.

For IBM-PC/compatibles.





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Continued from page 58

BUT DOES IT HAVE TWO LEGS TO STAND ON?

As with motion pictures, a marketable video game should be "evergreen," in the words of Joan Ziegler. As an evergreen property, products should have either a strong character, come from a bestselling book or established itself as a television property. It should also be a proven commodity with a marketing life of its own. Hi Tech's strengths in this area are *Tom and Jerry* and the *Sesame Street* characters.

"In the mind of the consumer, *Tom and Jerry* are presold," Ziegler says. "And there isn't a kid around who doesn't know Big Bird. But you must go further. To succeed you need to distinguish yourself as a technological developer. Ensuring that the technology lives up to the characterization of the property is important."

As if there weren't enough things to consider, character lifespan becomes the capper. In the case of *The Simpsons*, a Fox Network animated sitcom that has been in production just one year, many peers fear that Acclaim's investment might be wasted on a "flash in the pan" property.

"Licenses do come and go," admits Acclaim's Lux, who explains that agreements leave room for the growth or fall of a property. "It's our feeling that *The Simpsons* will be around for awhile."

When one of the video-game marketing directors was asked why his company would want to tie-in a film title to a video game, he explained that, as a company which was vying with over 50 other licensees in the video-game business, it was easy to get lost in the clutter.

"That's why it's a good idea to ride on the coattails of an established brand," he said. "Brand awareness and acceptance in the market will help get you noticed and help you to stand out."

His answer was intriguing, as it appears that perhaps character licensing is the only way for developers to survive the drive of the video-game industry's competitive "full court press." Perhaps the only way that these established or up-and-coming companies could survive was to play "Follow the Leader." Then Acclaim's Steve Lux cleared it out, showing that the potential was really available.

"With 30 million NES units out there, there are a lot of different players around," he explained. "The games are appealing to all types of players. That recognition by the consumer says that there is room for both original properties and properties like *The Simpsons*. The company that succeeds, however, is the one who is able to blend. You're going to be out of this business if you hitch yourself on one option. You've got to be well-rounded."

WHAT'S IN A *Name*?

In response to all the hype on entertainment licensees, Sega approaches the industry with a more personal touch. Love to play the Hollywood name game, but would rather play with your Sega home system? Be wary because, unlike the Nintendo Entertainment System, Sega doesn't have quite the quantity of film- or television-title adaptations available as the NES. But don't be too quick to judge this up-and-coming crowd pleaser. When it comes to name dropping, Sega is proving to be quite effective in the area of schmoozing.

You know Pat Riley, don't you? Oh, and of course, there's Tommy Lasorda, Arnold Palmer and that fabulous boxer—you know, the one who landed Tyson, Buster Douglas? Yes, the names are impressive and they definitely give video-game developers something juicy to lunch on, but how are names like this going to launch Sega's sales above the likes of *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* and *The Simpsons*?

"We're looking for things that the consumer can readily identify with," explains Al Nilsen, Sega's marketing director, on his company's adventures with big-name sports celebrities. "We want to personalize and listen to our consumers."

The answer is simple. First, provide quality graphics, animation and game-playing capabilities. Second, have a big-name celebrity or two who has an exclusive personal interest in the actual development of the game itself. For Sega, the latest names are Michael Jackson and Joe Montana.

You've already been prepped on *Michael Jackson's Moonwalker* (see the August '90 issue of VG&CE), a game designed by MJ himself, but prepare yourself for the next five years when Joe Montana gives you custom-made video games! In the largest royalty licensing agreement ever, Sega will invest multiple millions of dollars to involve Montana, a self-proclaimed "video-game nut," in the development of numerous games and software. *Joe Montana Football*, for the Sega Master System II, is the first offspring of the agreement. It will make its appearance on store shelves this month.

Montana has been and will be integral in setting up game plans and screen settings for the various projects, explains Nilsen. Previous sports games, inspired by Pat Riley, Tom Lasorda, Arnold Palmer and Buster Douglas, have also involved the celebrity in the development stages, but no involvement was quite like that with Montana and Jackson.

It's always been Sega's strategy to develop a great game first and *then* see if there's an appropriate license available, but when Michael Jackson and Joe Montana approached the company with proposals, Sega—quite starstruck, we're sure—took the ball and ran.

"Whether it be on the field with Joe Montana or even in the music industry with Michael Jackson, we're bringing home children's fantasies," Nilsen says.

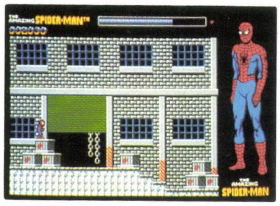
—P. S.

Your Favorite Super-Hero In His Toughest Challenge

The master-illusionist Mysterio has kidnapped Peter Parker's wife, Mary Jane, and taken her to an abandoned movie studio. There he waits, with an assortment of tricks, traps and surprises, for the Super-Hero he assumes is Parker's friend — but is really Peter Parker himself: The Amazing Spider-Man.

Become the famous web-slinger as he infiltrates the studio to save his wife — your strange, potent powers vs. Mysterio's devious, and dangerous, schemes, which include poisonous gases and electrified floors. And be prepared for Mysterio's robotic sentries, perfectly disguised to resemble anyone, even Mary Jane!

Spin webs, climb walls, even call on the infamous "spider-sense" to warn you of danger! But the special powers alone aren't enough. To defeat Mysterio, and save Mary Jane, you'll need all the resourcefulness, stamina and courage real Super-Heroes possess.



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Dr. Doom's Revenge,
X-Men: Madness in Murderworld
and
The Punisher!

X-MEN II®

The Fall of the Mutants

Your Favorite Mutants In The Ultimate Battle

Based on an actual series of X-Men comics (issues 225-227), *X-Men II: The Fall of the Mutants* thrusts your characters into the middle of one of the greatest battles ever fought in any Marvel comic.

The forces of Order and Chaos are at war, and Earth's fate hangs in the balance. Chaos, in the form of a demon lord known as The Adversary, has managed to warp time itself, and only the X-Men can restore order — provided, of course, they can also defeat Freedom Force: a group of mercenary mutants hired to eliminate the X-Men at any cost.

Choose your team of five X-Men from among 15 provided, among them Wolverine, Cyclops, Iceman, Phoenix and Nightcrawler. Watch all five battle simultaneously in combat, with you controlling any Super-Hero you want. Battle nine arch-villains and six distinct groups of henchmen in unique locations that can change with each new game.

Pick your team, and let the battle begin!

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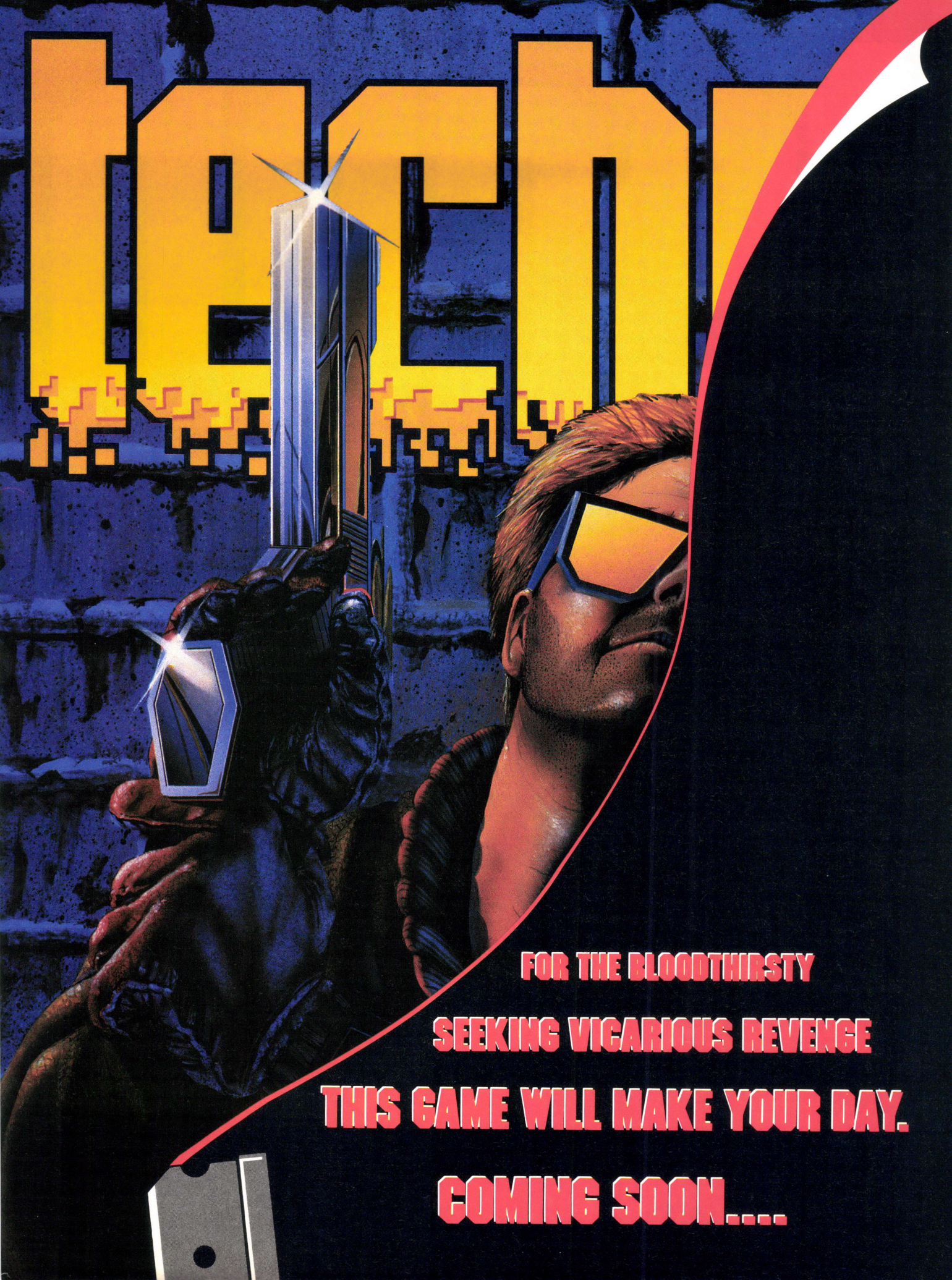
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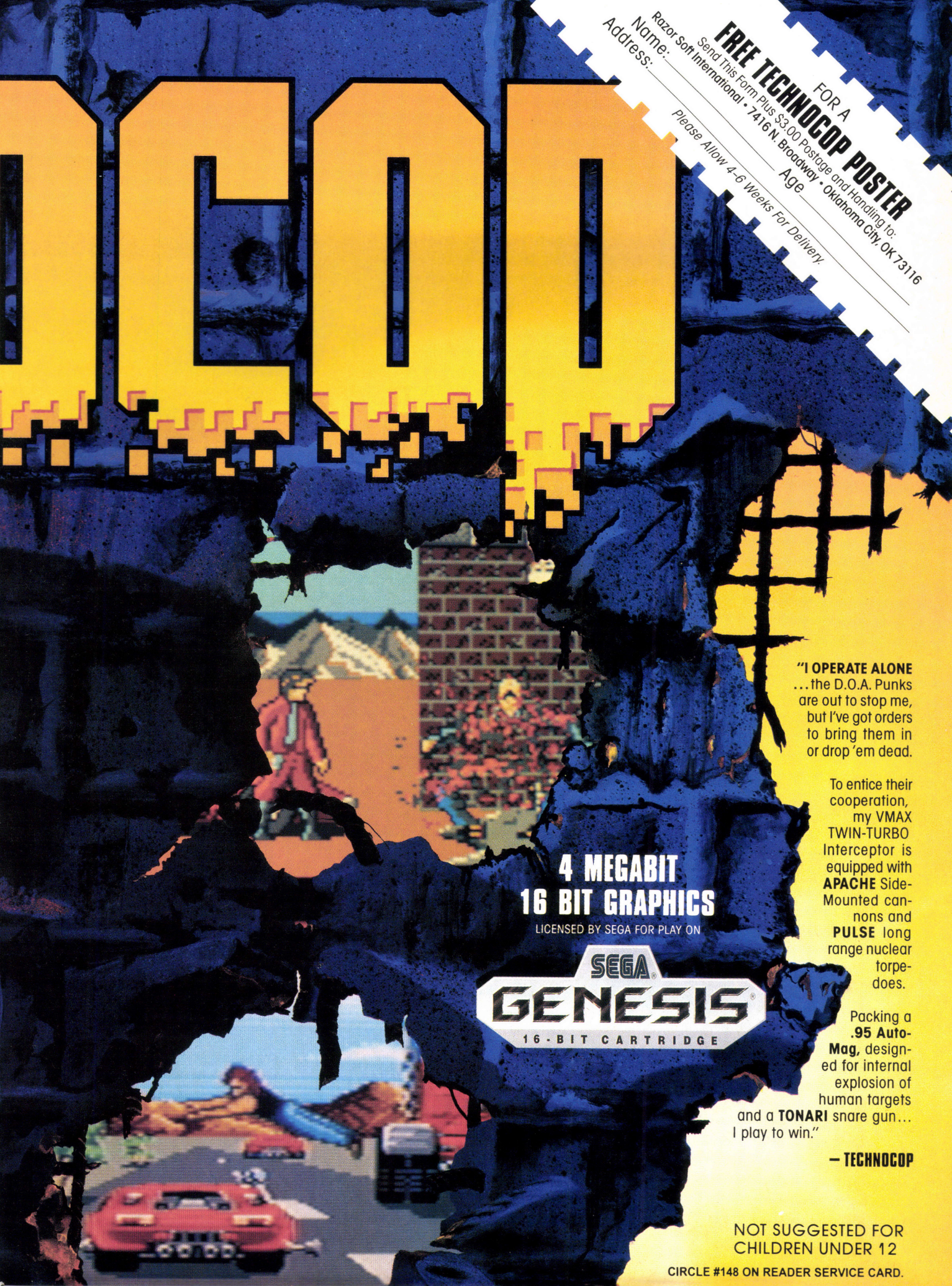
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4 MEGABIT
16 BIT GRAPHICS
LICENSED BY SEGA FOR PLAY ON
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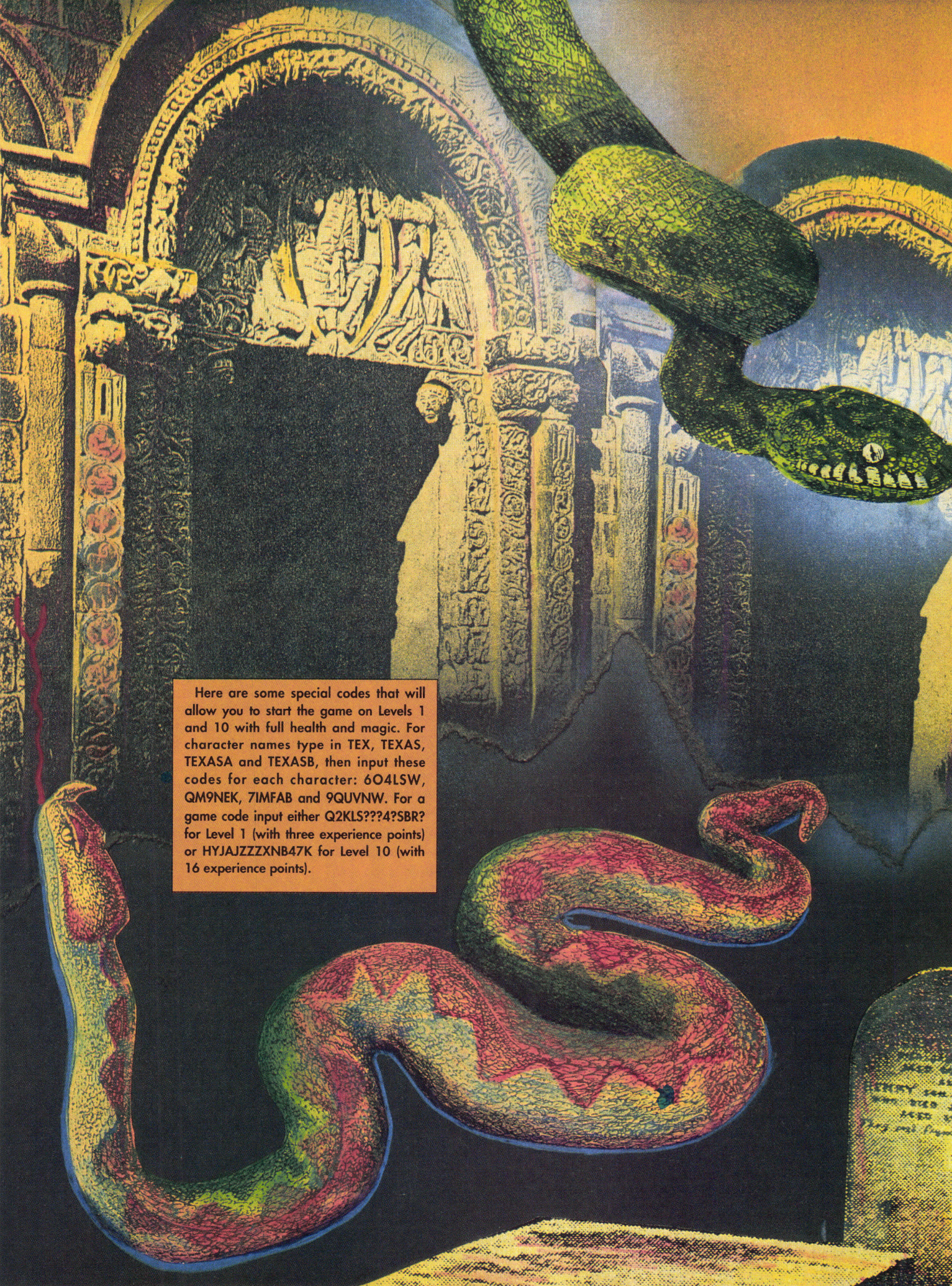
16-BIT CARTRIDGE
"I OPERATE ALONE ...the D.O.A. Punks are out to stop me, but I've got orders to bring them in or drop 'em dead.
To entice their cooperation, my VMAX TWIN-TURBO Interceptor is equipped with APACHE Side-Mounted cannons and PULSE long range nuclear torpedoes.
Packing a .95 Auto-Mag, designed for internal explosion of human targets and a TONARI snare gun... I play to win."
— TECHNOCOP
NOT SUGGESTED FOR CHILDREN UNDER 12
CIRCLE #148 ON READER SERVICE CARD.



Here are some special codes that will allow you to start the game on Levels 1 and 10 with full health and magic. For character names type in TEX, TEXAS, TEXASA and TEXASB, then input these codes for each character: 6O4LSW, QM9NEK, 7IMFAB and 9QUVNW. For a game code input either Q2KLS???4?SBR? for Level 1 (with three experience points) or HYJAJZZZXNB47K for Level 10 (with 16 experience points).

SWORDS & SERPENTS

PLAYER'S GUIDE, PART II

Four brave souls have stepped forward, each looking to be the victor in battle and proclaimed hero by his people. No, it's not self glory that they're looking for or even the hand of a pretty princess. They're out to get the Serpent. For as long as they can remember the Serpent has caused havoc in the region—and the time has come for it to end. Oh, there have been others, but they all failed and have not been heard from since. Only those that don't travel too far into the caves have returned to tell horrible stories of death.

So join us as we venture into the dark, lonely maze in search of the hideous Serpent.

We provided detailed maps of the first eight levels of Swords and Serpents in the last issue of VG&CE, and now we finish up the game by giving you the last eight. We have shown you where doors, stairs and other items are located. Magic spells, mystic weapons and the vital clues have numbers on them, but it'll be up to you to find out exactly what each is. After all, we can't make it too easy for you.

When playing Swords and Serpents, different people may come up with different maps, depending on the exit used to go to the different levels. So don't worry if your maps don't match ours exactly. We designed our maps so that when each level is placed over the previous level, the stairs will match.

Also, in the game, you'll be transported to two separate areas of Level 13. We've combined the two to form one single map.

Best of luck!

by Donn Nauert

FOR THE NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

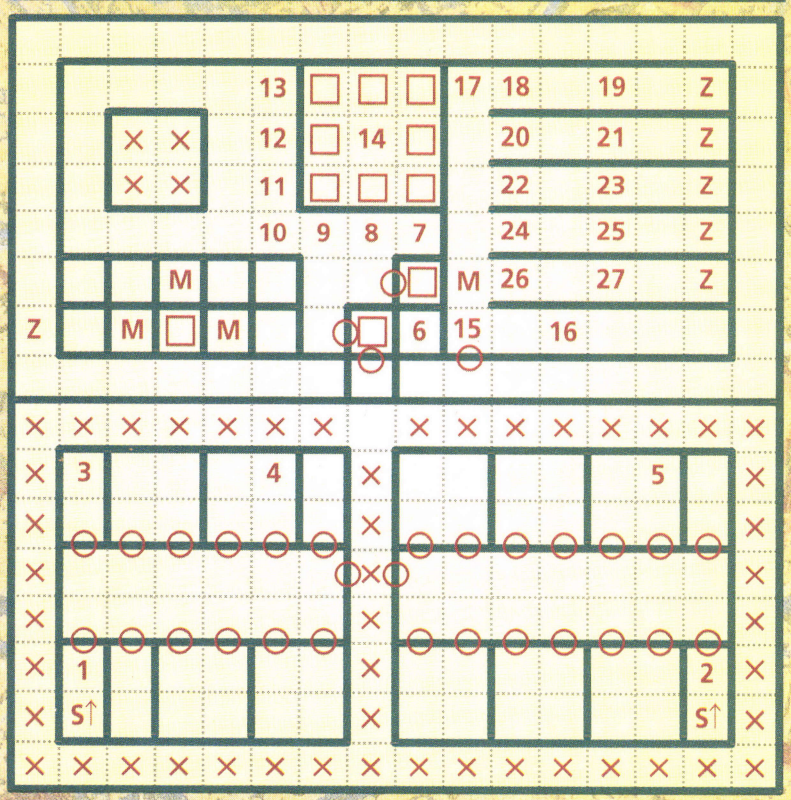
KEY

T	Temple
A	Armory
○	Doors
S	Secret Doors
↑	Up Staircase
↓	Down Staircase
Z	Zoom Tube*
□	Teleporter*
M	Magic Fountain
×	Trap
#1-100	Items, Weapons, Magic Spells
ST	Start
Ⓖ	Gold Door
Ⓑ	Bronze Door

* or a location you have been transported to

The Beginning of the End!

MAP OF LEVEL 9

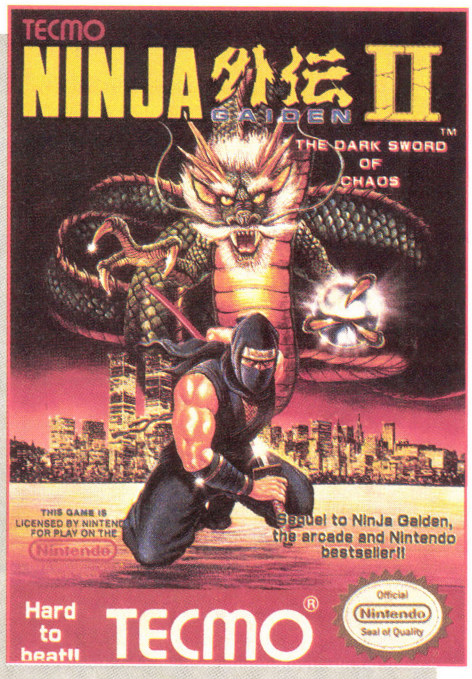


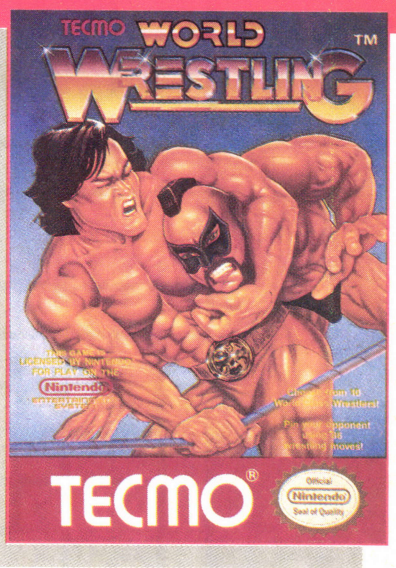
You might want to wear your winter coat or at least use a little wing magic to avoid that icy wind. Go ahead and take a chance, for what's behind wall Number One is well worth it. There are also zoom tubes galore on this floor. If you get sent to a level you don't recognize, it's probably Level 13.

YOU'VE TRIED THE REST
NOW PLAY THE BEST!

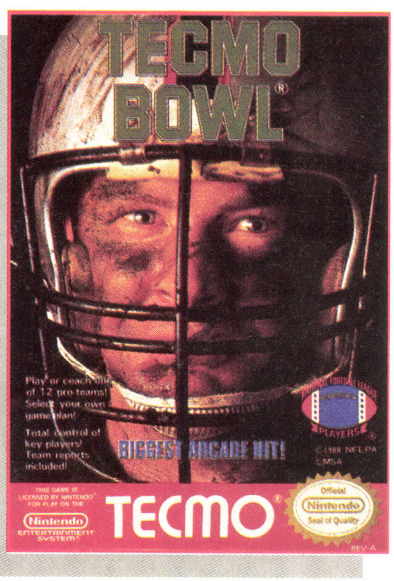
- Single player action
- Superior graphics & music
- 6 special weapons
- 4 "Power up" items
- 9 Cinema displays
- 20 Different stages
- Continue option

- Single player action
- Fantastic graphics & music
- 6 special weapons
- 5 "Power up" items
- 10 Cinema displays
- 20 Different stages
- Continue option

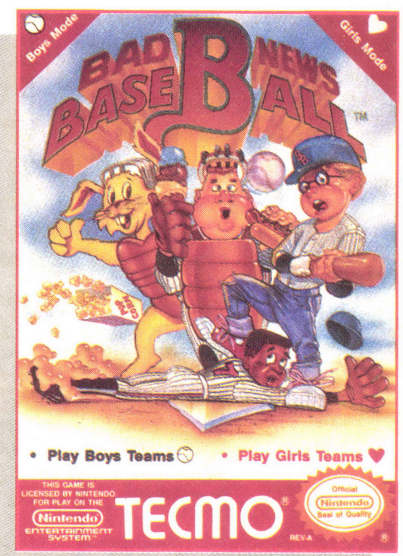




- 1 or 2 players
- Superior graphics
- Animated announcer
- Outside-the-ring action
- 34 different killer moves
- Power meters
- Training mode for 1 player



- 1 or 2 players
- Superior graphics
- Coaching mode
- Password for continued action
- 12 teams
- Super action cinema screens



- 1 or 2 players
- Superior graphics
- Password for continued action
- Instant close-ups
- Over 20 different cinema displays
- 24 Different teams
- Choose from 18 different pitches

THIS GAME IS LICENCED BY NINTENDO® FOR PLAY ON THE Nintendo ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM®

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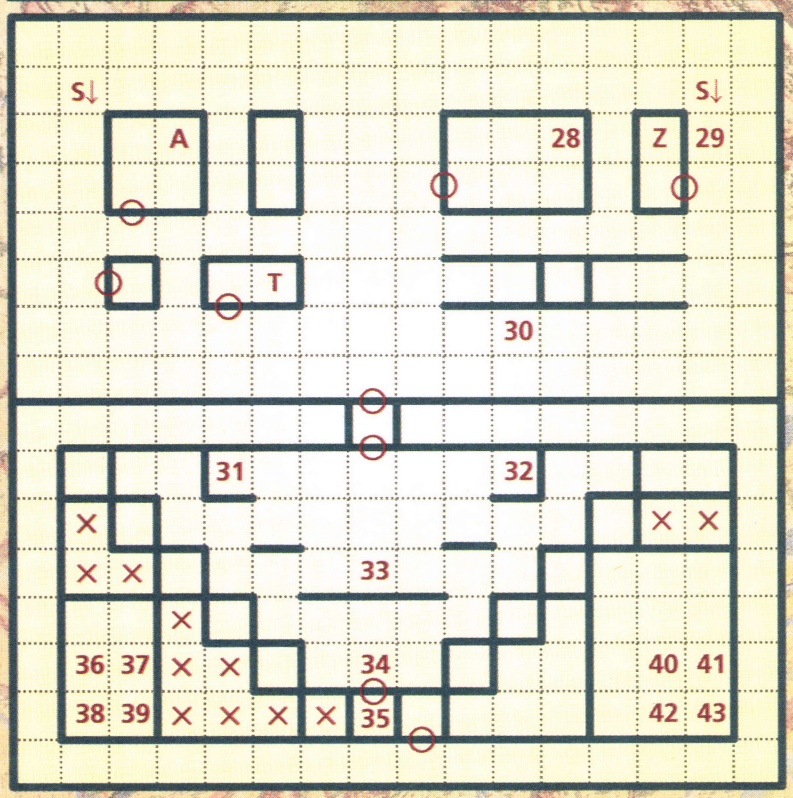
CIRCLE #149 ON READER SERVICE CARD

End of the Beginning

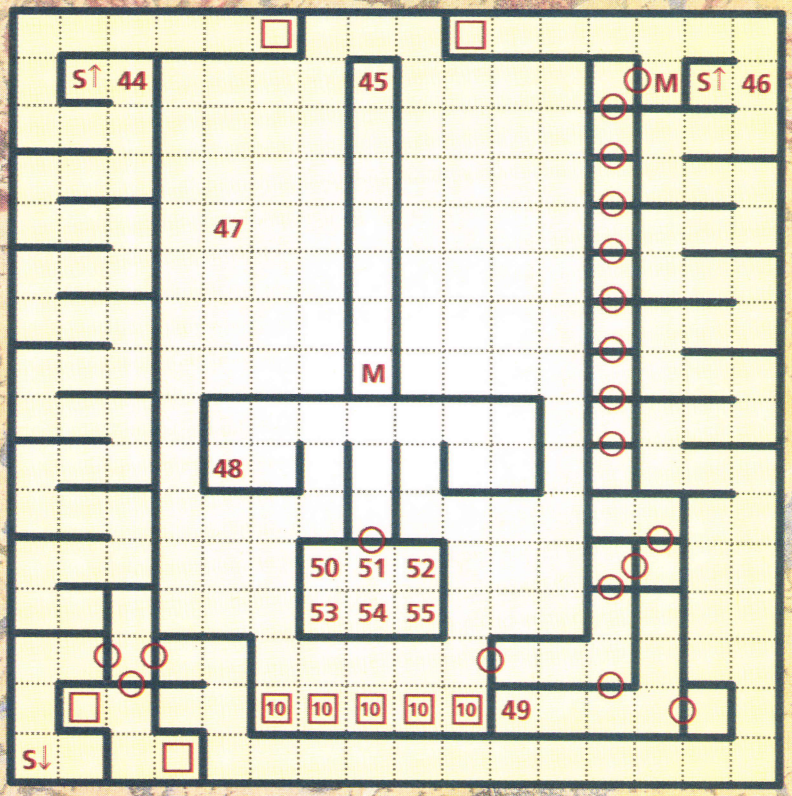
MAP OF LEVEL 10



"Hot Foot, Hot Foot" would be a better name for this level. At least it has a temple and an armory as well as some nice weapon accessories. If you get trapped, you might want to die so you can start off on this level.

Sword

MAP OF LEVEL 11

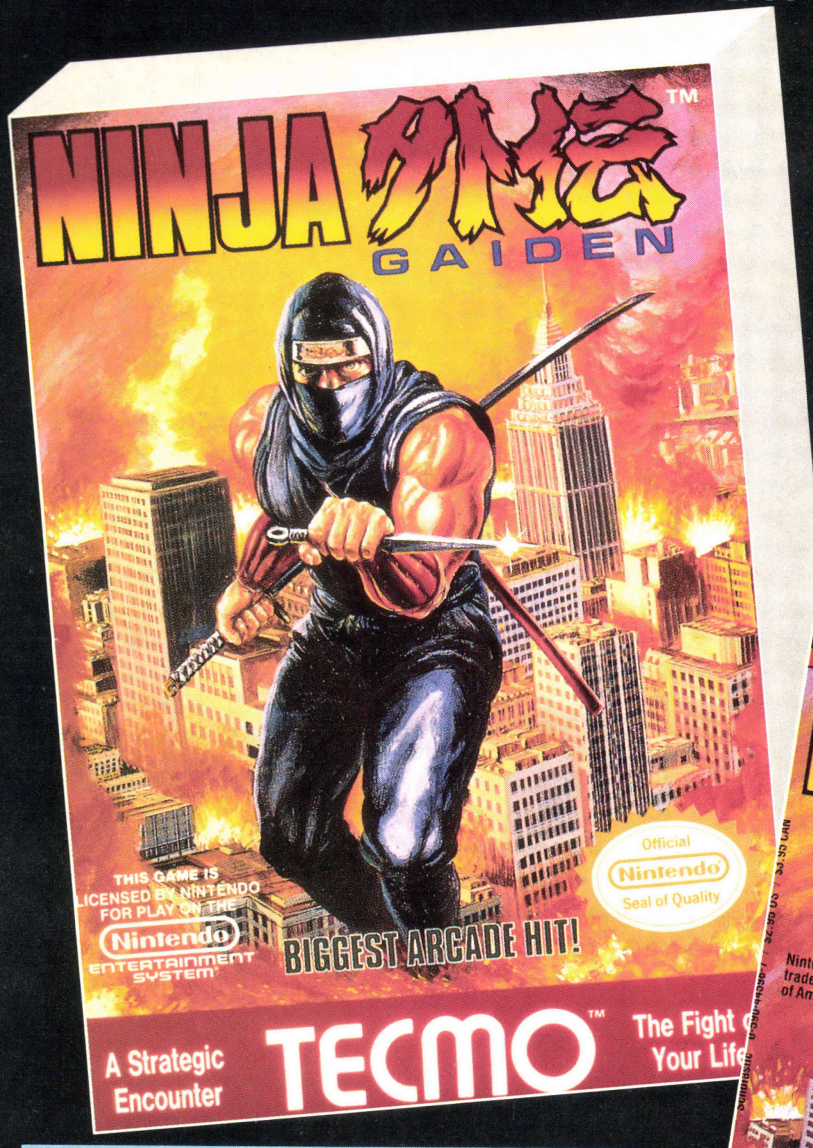


If you've found all the clues and written them down, then you know what to do in the tip of the sword. When you leave this level your wallet will be mighty fat. Have you ever noticed that cats like to chase their tails seven times before the door will open?

continued on page 116

LEARN THE REAL STORY!

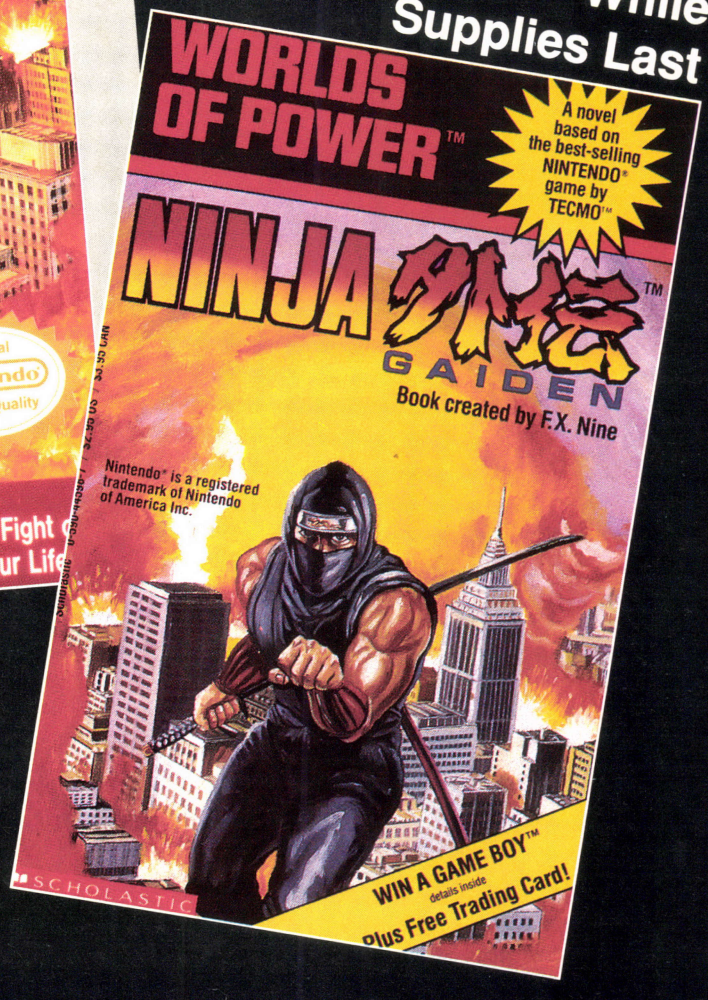
NINJA 外伝™ GAIDEN



FREE!
NINJA GAIDEN™ NOVEL

For nearest participating dealer, call 1-800-338-0336

While Supplies Last



FREE SCHOLASTIC NOVEL

With the Purchase of NINJA GAIDEN™ Cartridge

$2.95 VALUE

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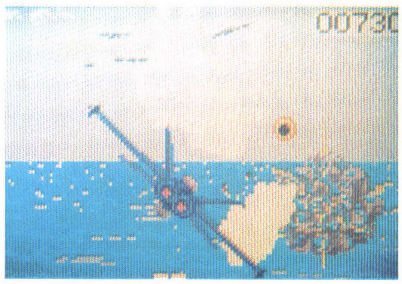
CIRCLE #150 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

Warning: The Foll
Chills, Dizziness And

Atari Lynx™ comes with AC adaptor, Comlynx™ cable and four games on one Lynx game cartridge.

Gauntlet®: Smash arcade hit. The enchanted Star Gem has crashed to earth. Capture it from evil creatures before they use its magical strength to destroy man. 1 to 4 players.

Lots of games are available on compact cartridges, with more being developed as we speak.



Blue Lightning™: Fly a top secret combat jet while avoiding missiles, ice fields, canyon walls and the dark of night.

Plug any standard headset into the Lynx for more realistic 4 channel sound

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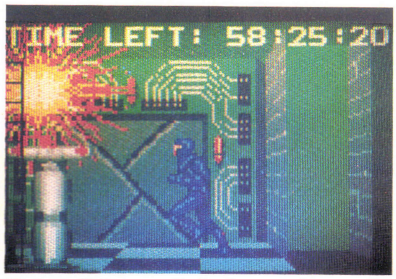
owing May Cause Shortness Of Breath.

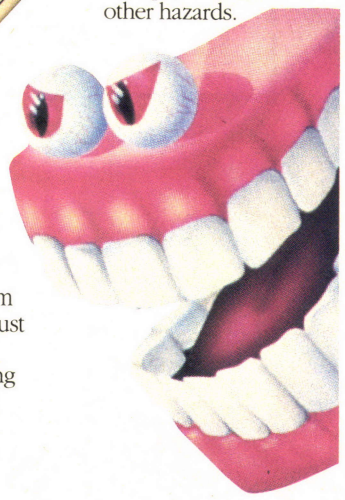


Electrocop™: Rescue the kidnapped daughter of the president. Invade the Steel Complex where dangerous robot traps protect the Criminal Brain.

California Games®: Surf your brains out. Skateboard the Half Pipe. Juggle the Foot Bag. Slam off the desert berms on your BMX bike.

Chip's Challenge™: Help Chip through 144 levels without getting nailed by cherry bombs, water - traps, and hundreds of other hazards.

KLAX™: The latest arcade mega-hit from Atari Games. You must form "Klax" from colored tiles tumbling down the conveyor belt. 100 levels.



Connect up to 8 Lynxes. On some games, all 8 players can be on screen at once.

The Lynx portable game system is every bit as good as home systems.

It has great color and sharpness like a big screen TV.

It has deep levels of play on popular and new games.

And on some games, you will be able to link up to eight Lynxes so everybody can play together.

It's enough to give you chills.

And make our competitors sick.

It's available at all major toy and electronic retailers.

So see it for yourself at the Lynx dealer nearest you.

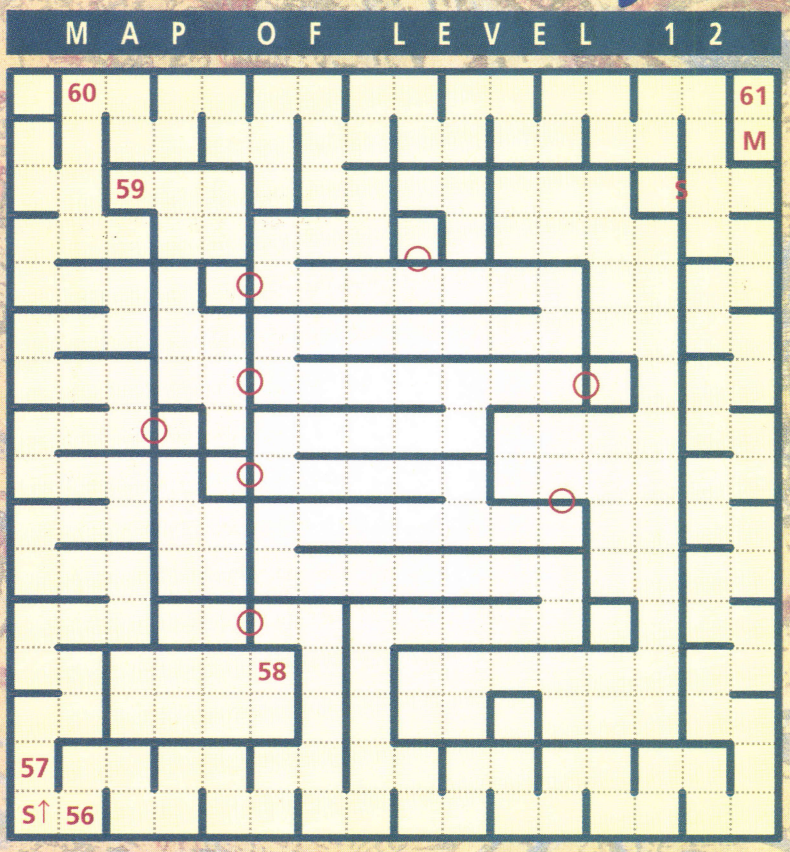
ATARI LYNX PORTABLE COLOR ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

licensed to Atari Corp.) California Games®, Chip's Challenge™, and Blue Lightning™ are trademarks or registered trademarks of Epyx, Inc. ©1990. Gauntlet® and Klax™ are registered trademarks of Atari Games Corp. ©1990.

CIRCLE #151 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

continued from page 112

Black Crystal



Although this may be the most barren level as far as clues and items found, it's quality not quantity that counts—is it not? Once you've found that special item, return to the old man on Level 1 for a little ride to another section of Level 13.

ATARI® 7800™

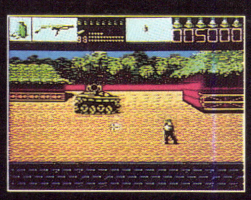
ALIEN™ BRIGADE

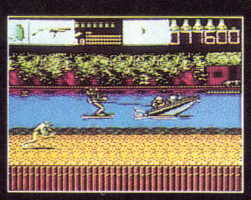
The Alien Brigade has entered the Atari 7800 system. Attacking with full frontal fury. Infiltrating your army. Turning your men into slimy zombies.

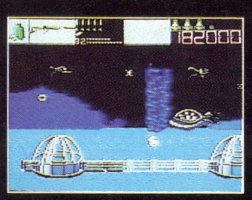
You've got a war on your hands. You've got to stay alive, man. You've got hostages to rescue. And your weapons are joystick or light gun controlled. So start wasting 'em. But be careful, you could be 86ing your own men.

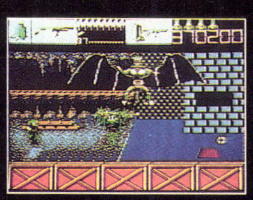
One of the new games for the Atari 7800. Now oozing its way to a store near you.

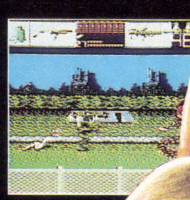
AN ALIEN IS A WONDERFUL THING TO WASTE.







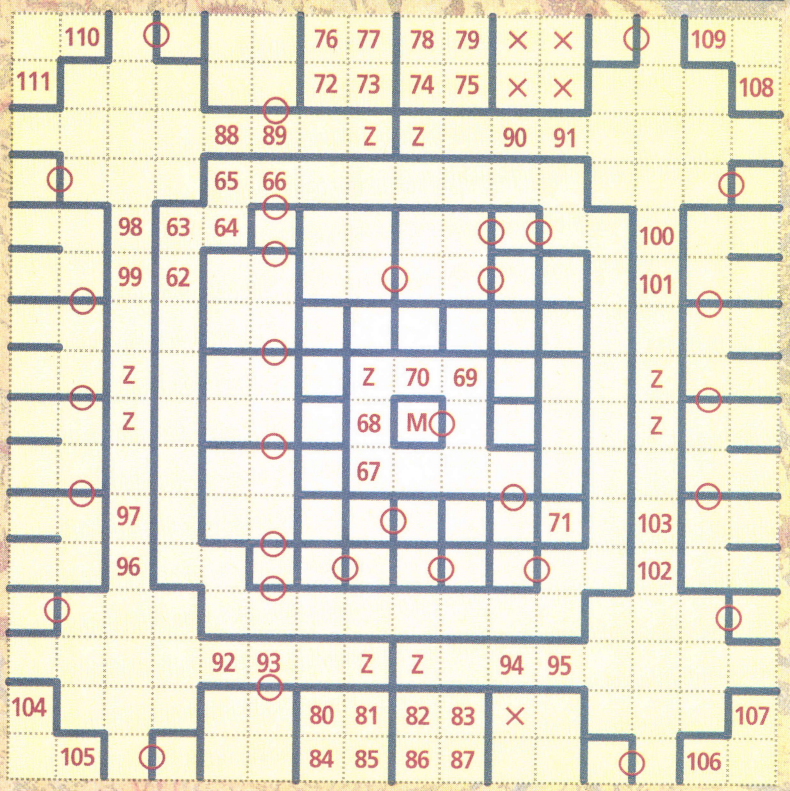




CIRCLE #152 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

The Secret Level

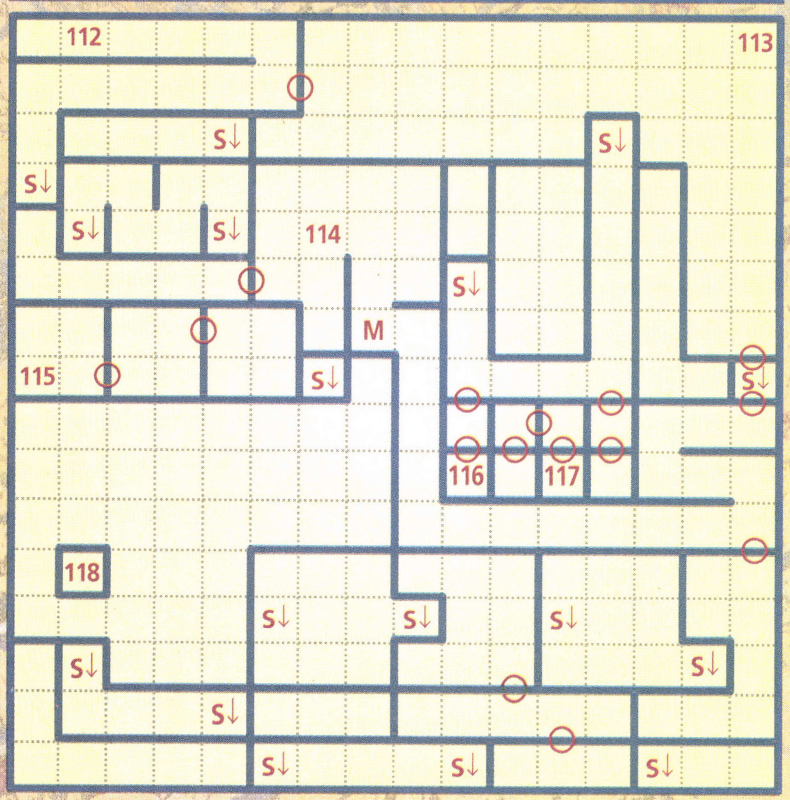
MAP OF LEVEL 13



In case you haven't noticed, there are no stairs on this level (which just happens to have two sections). A lot of gold and poison gas can be found in one, with the Ruby Amulet waiting to be found in the other. Once you find it, return to the old man on Level 10 to be sent to...

Over

MAP OF LEVEL 14



Would you look at all the stairs going to Level 15. Just don't go down too early or you'll miss some important words from you-know-who.

ATARI® 7800™

IKARI WARRIORS™

You are the Ikari warrior on the Atari 7800 system.

You go behind enemy lines with nothing but machine guns, tanks, grenades and a prayer. You and your buddy wipe out the enemy, dodging bullets, knives and missiles. You have to rescue the colonel from an impenetrable fortress. And ammo is running low. Yes, war is hell. But you can handle it—with one or two players.

One of the new games for Atari 7800. Try it. If you're man enough.

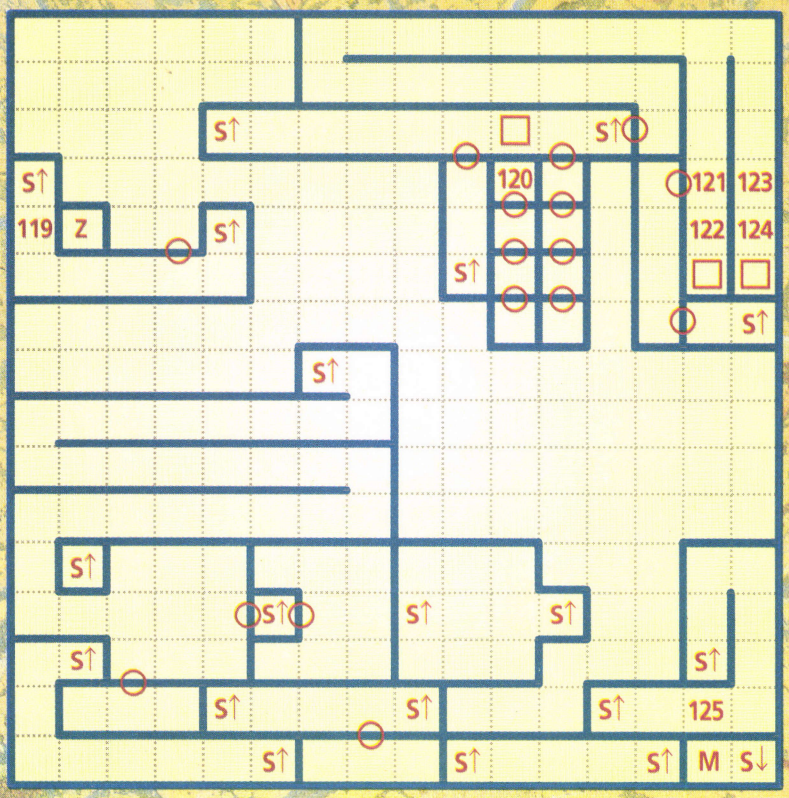
Ikari Warriors is a trademark of SNK Corp. of America.

THE BOYS ARE MAKING HOUSECALLS.

CIRCLE #153 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

Under!

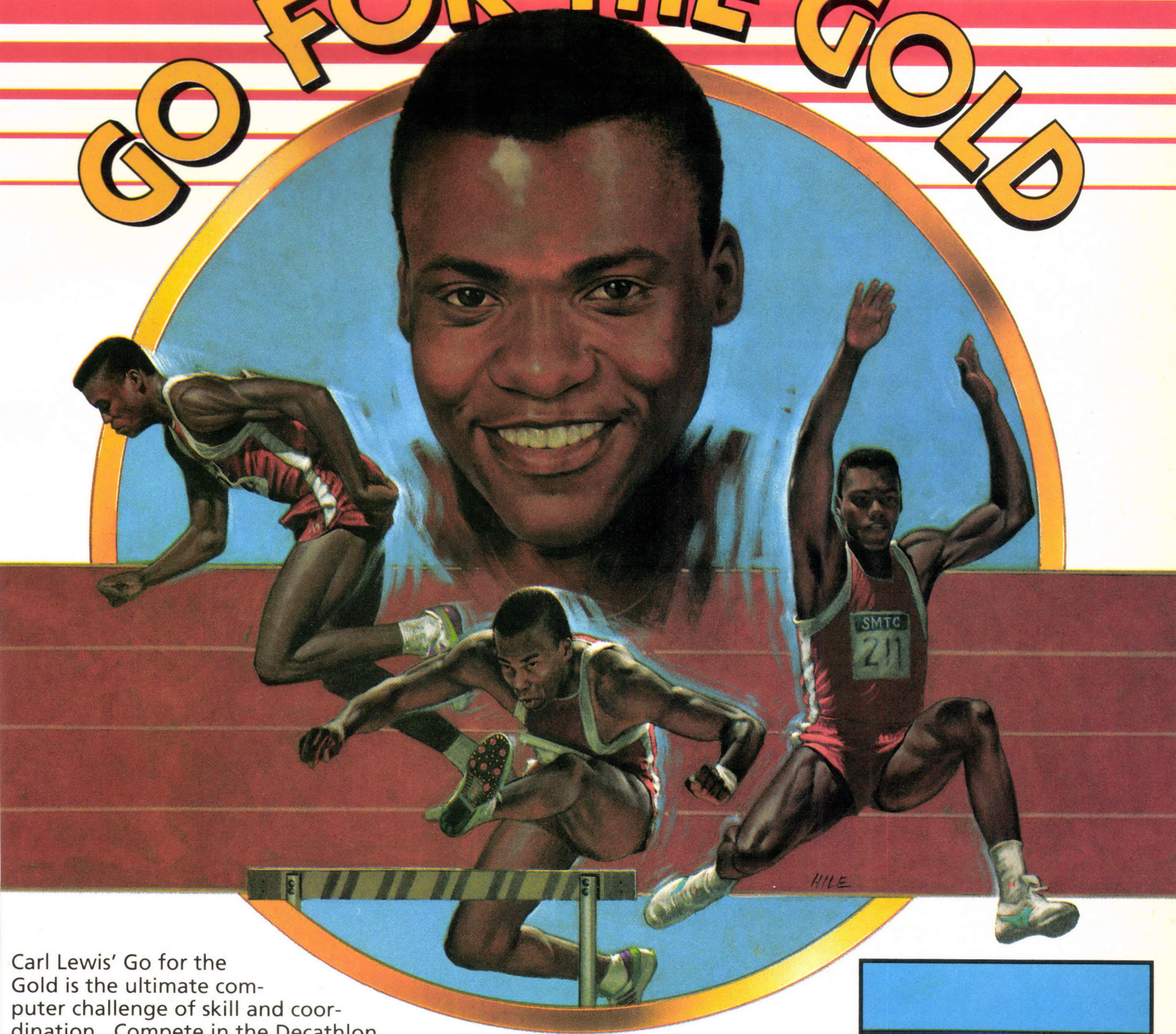
MAP OF LEVEL 15



Again you'll find a lot of stairs, and it always seems to be the last one you try that takes you to the next level. Hopefully you will find the last clue before you accidentally zoom yourself back to Level 10.

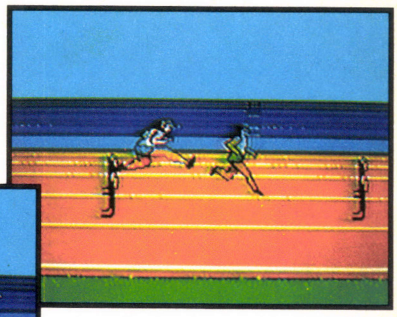
Carl Lewis

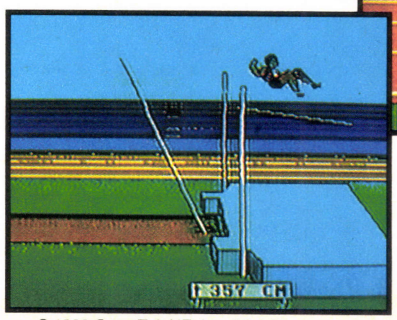
GO FOR THE GOLD



Carl Lewis' Go for the Gold is the ultimate computer challenge of skill and coordination. Compete in the Decathlon against Carl Lewis-the six time Olympic Gold medalist-or you can be Carl Lewis and try to live up to his world renowned reputation.

So, if you think that you're up to it; give it a try-Carl Lewis' Go for the Gold. It's guaranteed to get your adrenaline pumping.





Screens shown are from the IBM version.

GameTek™

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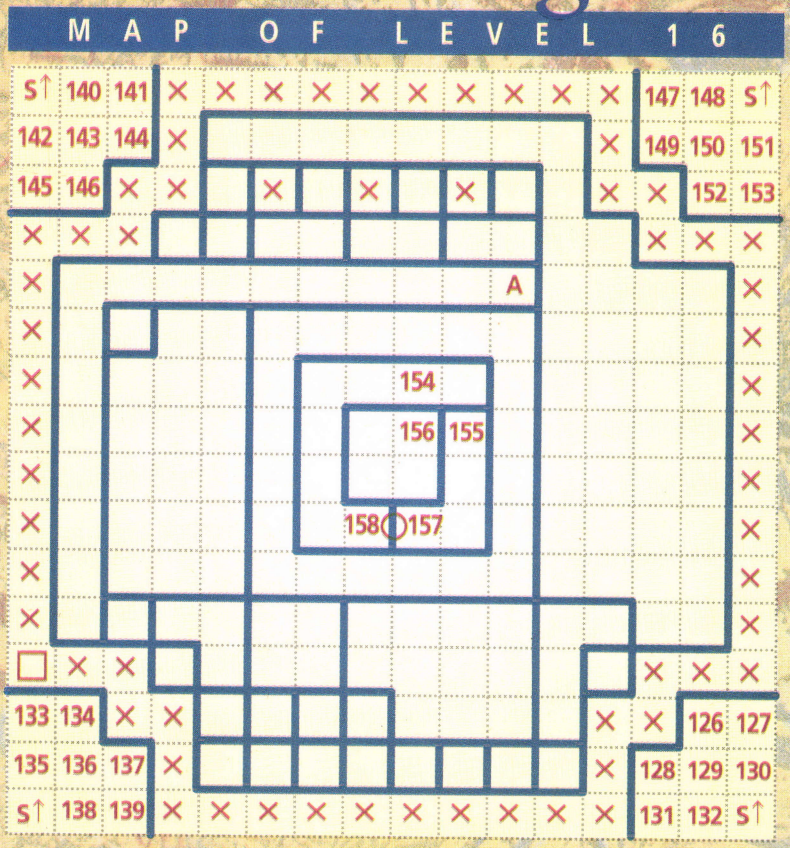
CIRCLE #154
ON READER SERVICE CARD.

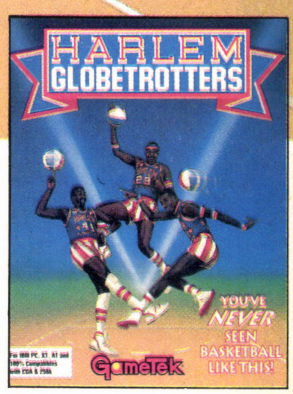
Dragon



There seems to be something gnawing away at your Reeboks, but don't use all your magic too soon or you'll be sorry. If you've uncovered all the clues in the game, you should have no trouble at all reaching the dragon. Getting to him is one thing; defeating him is another. Good luck!

YOU'VE NEVER SEEN BASKETBALL LIKE THIS...

HARLEM GLOBETROTTERS



The Harlem Globetrotters bring their brand of high-speed action to the court on your computer. With all the finesse you'd expect from top professionals, plus famous trick passes like the heel kick and incredible trick shots like the full-court hook - you've got basketball game play like you've never seen it before. So, if you're looking for a nice game, then buy just any old basketball game. But if you're looking for the ultimate challenge, then get Harlem Globetrotters Basketball!

GameTek®

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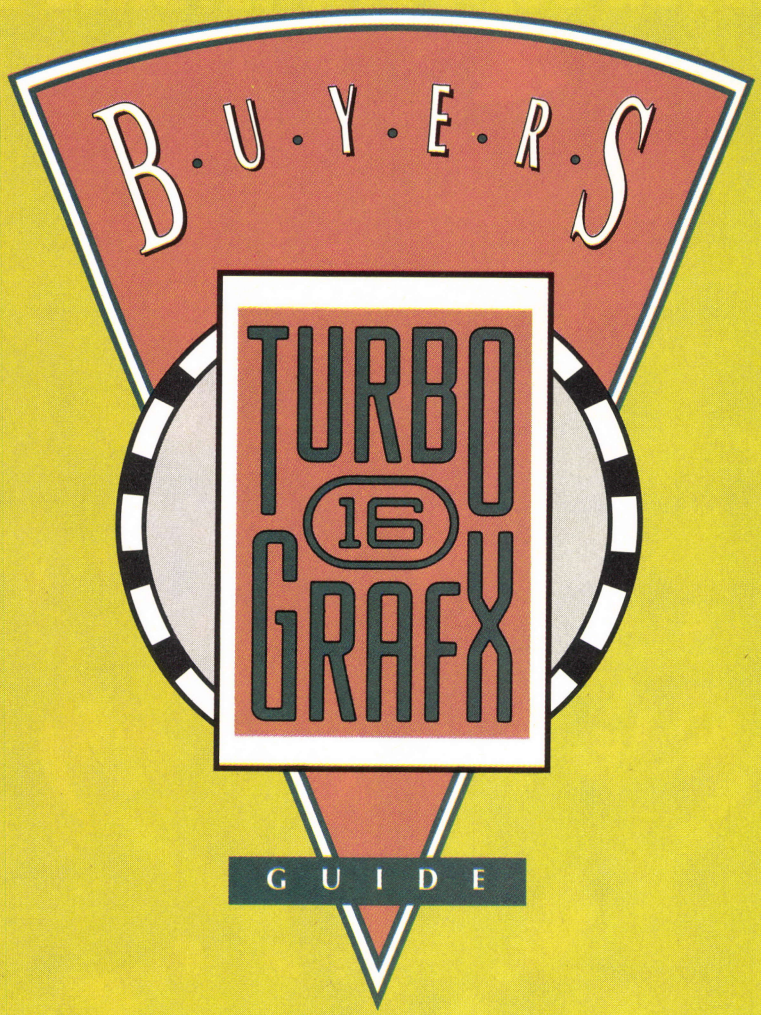
CIRCLE #155 ON READER SERVICE CARD.



QUITE FREQUENTLY, THE QUESTION COMES TO US AS TO WHETHER SEGA AND NEC CAN TAKE ON NINTENDO, THE VIRTUAL KING OF THE VIDEO-GAME HILL. SEEING THAT THE TWO CHALLENGING COMPANIES HAVE GOTTEN A DECENT HEAD START IN THE "NEXT-GENERATION" HARDWARE WARS, AND NINTENDO STILL REFUSES TO ANNOUNCE THE PLANS TO BRING THE SUPER FAMICOM TO AMERICA, THE ANSWER WOULD SEEM TO BE AN UNEQUIVOCAL "YES."

HERE WE SIT NEARLY A YEAR AND A HALF AFTER THE GENESIS AND TURBOGRAFX-16 WERE INTRODUCED, AND LOTS OF PLAYERS ARE HAPPY WITH THEIR CHOICE TO UPGRADE TO THE FUTURE OF VIDEO GAMING.

WHAT WE OFFER ON THE NEXT PAGES IS A CHECKLIST OF WHAT HAS BEEN RELEASED IN THE LAST YEAR (FROM JANUARY 1990 TO JANUARY 1991) FOR THE TURBOGRAFX-16. BEING THAT THINGS ARE CHANGING AND NEW GAME TITLES ARE ADDED TO THE LIST EACH WEEK, THIS IS BY NO MEANS A COMPLETE CHART OF WHAT TG-16 OWNERS CAN EXPECT TO HAVE AVAILABLE. THE TG-16 BUYER'S GUIDE PROVIDES A FRAMEWORK TO GO BY.

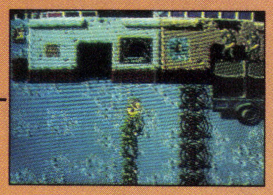
INDEED, IF 1990 IS ANY INDICATION, 1991 WILL BE A BANNER YEAR FOR THE TURBOGRAFX-16 AND THE VIDEO-GAME WORLD IN GENERAL. WE'RE HEARING ABOUT UPCOMING SOFTWARE THAT WILL KNOCK YOUR SOCKS OFF—BUT WE'LL LEAVE THE DETAILS FOR NEXT YEAR!

Battle Royale

Up to five players can join in on the fun as you try to see who can stay in the ring the longest. But don't get this game confused with a wrestling game because it's not. Each of the five different characters have up to seven distinctive moves that can be mastered to throw your friend(s) for a loop.

Bloody Wolf

The President has been kidnapped by a ruthless general in South America after his plane goes down. Use your skills as an elite member of the "Bloody Wolf," a highly trained special combat team, to fight your way through the thick jungles before reaching the enemy stronghold. You'll have to be at your combat best if you want to free the President and take out the mad General.

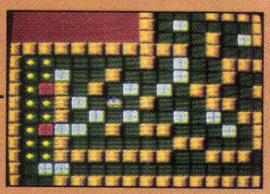


Bonk's Adventure

The evil King Drool has kidnapped the beautiful Dragon Princess Za, and Bonk the caveman is the only one that can save her. In the year 10,000 B.C., there was no such thing as a gun or even a bazooka, so Bonk will just have to "use" his head if he wants to rescue the princess and save the day.

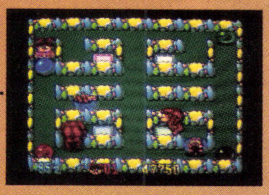
Boxy Boy

So you're looking for a part-time job to earn a little extra money, are you? Then here's a video game that could get you going in the right direction. In *Boxy Boy* you've been hired part-time to arrange boxes in a neat stack. But don't get too comfortable in one spot, because your adventure will take you through 250 screens in five different countries including China, Egypt and the South Pole.

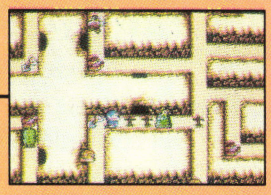


Chew-Man-Fu

The evil Chew-Man-Fu has deprived the people of their favorite foods, fried rice and egg rolls, for long enough—and the two tough twin sisters aren't going to take it anymore. The object of the game is to push, pull or kick colored balls onto plates of the same color. Doing so will wipe out all Chew-Man-Fu's henchmen from the screen. The game also features kickball and edit-mode options.



Crater Maze



You and your friends are on a friendly trip through time when, suddenly, you're attacked by Kublai, the second in command to the evil Zenzombie. Now you'll have to bounce through different periods of time, digging craters to trap Zenzombie's followers in an effort to rescue your friends. *Crater Maze* has 60 levels in each of the three difficulty settings.

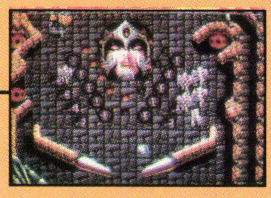
Cyber Core

After a hundred years in space, your expeditionary party returns to earth only to find out it's been taken over by giant hyper-insects. Your only hope (and mankind's) is to merge with the ultra-life-form Kimyra. Becoming half-man and half-insect is the only way you can get the strength to go up against the giant killer bee, Double saw, before the nasty insect horde destroys everything in sight.

Deep Blue

Take a dive into this deep sea underwater adventure as the commander of an A.N.G.E.L. fish attack sub. Evil alien invaders have mutated our fish and other sea life with intentions of controlling the world. Do you and your crew have what it takes to fight your way through the unfriendly sea life and defeat the alien creatures to which they serve allegiance?

Devil Crush



Break the devil's magic spells and restore light to a cursed world. That's the theme of this incredible video-pinball game that's a sequel to *Alien Crush*, the game that set the standard for all video-pinball games to come. *Devil Crush* features three sets of flippers, adjustable ball speed, a "tilt" feature and three full playing fields with six different bonus screens to shoot for.

Dragon Curse

You're the cool and handsome Hu-Man, but it seems that you're having a bad day. First, you get yourself captured by the horrible Mecha Dragon. Then, just about the time you're going to escape, he puts a curse on you that turns you into a lizard. Now you have to travel the land in search of the only thing that can transform you back to your normal Hu-Man self, the legendary Salamander Cross.

FROM THE CREATORS OF
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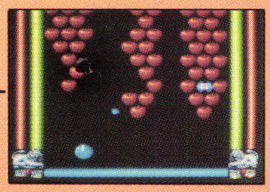
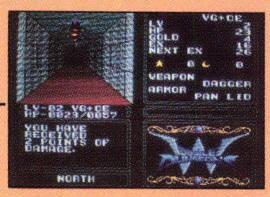
Drop Off

Poor Takashi. His girlfriend, Izumi, has been in a deep sleep for some time, and not even his friendliness can wake her. It wasn't until the goddess appeared in one of his dreams that he knew exactly what had happened and what must be done to save her. It seems that an evil spirit has taken over her soul, and now Takashi must enter Izumi's dream and defeat the spirit if she's ever going to waken. Using a pad and ball you must knock out the monsters in her dreams in a game that resembles *Breakout*.



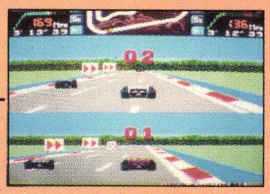
Double Dungeons

Do you have what it takes to defend yourself against the evils that lurk behind the shadows? You can play alone as you try to score as many gold and jewels in the different scenarios as possible or have a friend join you. But be careful—all the shiny trinkets can turn your best friend into your enemy. Then it becomes a race to see who can defeat the evil boss first.



Final Lap Twin

You're not sure why, but your father and sister have sent you on a training mission to become the world four-wheel-drive champion. Put your driving skills to the test as you go against the computer or a friend. Choose from the F3000 GP or the F-1 GP series, and try to score as many points or compete for rankings in one of the 24 different races. You can also go against a gang of four-wheel-drive warriors. Listen to the people along the way for clues to find out what your family has in store for you.

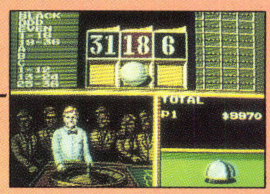


J.J. & Jeff

Oh no! The evil boss Kara has kidnapped someone, but not to worry—those two detectives J.J. and Jeff are on the case. Choose either J.J. or Jeff to control through the game but watch out, because your partner can get jealous, and then it becomes every man for himself. Collect clues and coins while searching for hidden screens and keys as you kick your way through the eight levels of this hilarious detective adventure.

King of Casino

As you enter your hotel room, the first thing on your mind is to get as much information on the 15 casinos in town as you can. Some casinos are big, some are small, but each one has its own characteristics and specializes in different games. You stroll into one of the larger casinos. Will it be blackjack or maybe poker? How about the slot machines? You could take a spin at the roulette table, or is keno your game? Play by yourself or with up to five friends to see who will be crowned "King of Casino."



2 Much!

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2 Much Intensity!

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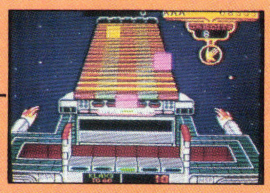
Klax

Tengen brings its hit arcade game home to the TG-16. In *Klax* you simply catch colored tiles that come down a conveyer belt and arrange them in same-colored stacks of three or more that can be oriented horizontally, vertically or diagonally. As in the arcade version, you have the warps and special bonus points that help make this game a classic no matter what system it's played on.



Last Alert

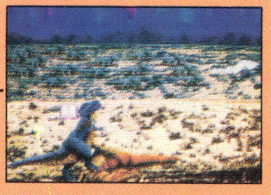
The Force Project, an international arms syndicate led by Dr.Che Garcia, is once again trying to take over the world. You play Guy Kazama top C.I.A. agent and the only person in the world capable of stopping the horde of misguided renegades. Using all the latest military equipment, you take off to complete the six missions necessary to defuse and tame the Force Project before time runs out.

Legendary Axe II

You and your brother are in mortal combat to see which one of you will take the throne. Your evil brother, desperate for victory, calls on the evil powers of the wicked King Drodam. Now all is lost. Evil reigns as your brother brings destruction and chaos across the land. If you could find the legendary royal sword, only then would you have the magic needed to combat the evil forces. Is the land lost forever, or will the sting of the cold sword bring peace back to the kingdom?

Magical Dinosaur Tour

Have you ever wondered what a Tyrannosaurus looks like, or what it ate and what regions of the world it could be found in? In this new educational CD-ROM, let Lolo, the talking dinosaur, guide you through a complete look at all the dinosaurs that roamed the land, sea and skies 100 million years ago. Using information provided by experts from around the world, this animated dinosaur encyclopedia will show you the family tree of dinosaur types, provide a search mode to help locate specific dinosaurs and even give you possible reasons for the dinosaurs' extinction.



Military Madness

It's the 21st century and man has finally inhabited the moon. With the most powerful nations laying claim to the moon's vast resources, much fighting has occurred. That's when the evil axis empire launched an all-out attack and captured most of the moon. Their ultimate plan—to destroy the earth. Can you lead the allied powers in defeating the axis empire before they launch the most powerful of all weapons, the supreme atomic missile, in this classic game of strategy?

Live the dream...

WONDERLAND™

Step into the bizarre logic of Lewis Carroll's spellbinding imagination...

Attend the Mad Hatter's absurd tea party. Meet the caterpillar perched upon his mushroom, puffing away on his hookah. Drop in on the duchess (is that a baby or a piglet she is holding?) and her temperamental cook.

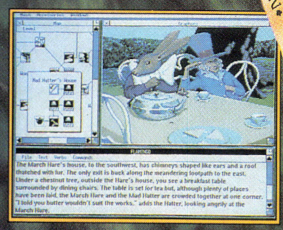
You, as Alice, face a plethora of puzzles, puns and conundrums. Like how to assist the royal gardeners in painting the roses red before the Queen of Hearts arrives to inspect them. Challenges to perplex and enchant you for hundreds of hours.

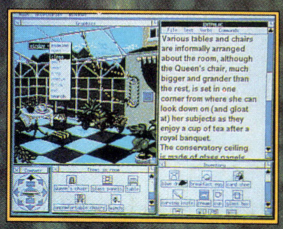
But Wonderland isn't just a bewitching story. It's playing environment breaks new ground for computer adventures. Here's what the editor of Computer Gaming World has to say about it!

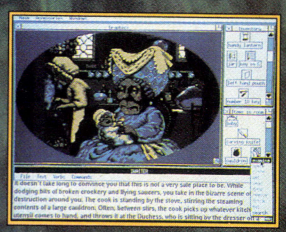
"The game is neither strictly a text adventure nor can it be described as a graphic adventure. It is its own genre... The game uses multi-tasking to offer an incredible array of features..."

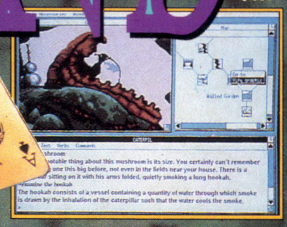
Besides superb graphics and sound support, Wonderland's unique windowing environment offers pull-down verb and noun menus, graphics you can size up or down and move around the screen, automated mapping, point-and-click object manipulation, a compass for directional movement, and extensive on-screen help.

"Innovative," "ambitious" (The Chicago Tribune), "exquisite and impressive" (CGW), "brilliant and insane" (The Electronic Gamer), are more words used to describe Wonderland. Questbusters calls its windowed universe "the ultimate interface." Stunning graphics, impressive sound board support and a captivating story, all in a sophisticated new windowing system, combine to make Wonderland the richest adventure ever: a game to play, to tell, and to inhabit.









Screens taken from IBM VGA version.
For IBM, Amiga and Atari ST computers.
Suggested price $59.99

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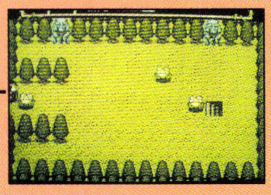
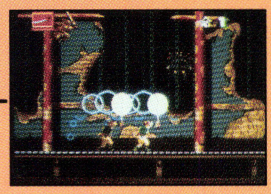
NEUTOPIA

THE EVIL DIRTH HAS STOLEN THE EIGHT SACRED MEDALLIONS AND KIDNAPPED THE BEAUTIFUL PRINCESS RARAN, SENDING THE PEACEFUL LAND OF NEUTOPIA INTO CHAOS. CAN THE YOUNG HERO JAZETA SUCCESSFULLY BATTLE THE ENEMY MONSTERS AND RESTORE PEACE TO THE LAND? ONLY YOU CAN ANSWER THAT QUESTION. THIS ADVENTURE GAME FEATURES EIGHT LEVELS OF PLAY AND CONTAINS 16 LABYRINTHS TO EXPLORE.



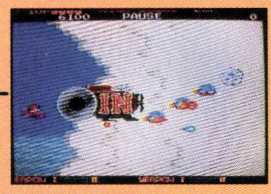
NINJA SPIRIT

YOUR FATHER IS MURDERED RIGHT BEFORE YOUR EYES, BUT WHO WAS THAT HALF-MAN/HALF-BEAST NINJA? THERE'S NO TIME FOR MOURNING, JUST TIME FOR AVENGING HIS DEATH. YOU PLAY MOONLIGHT IN THIS TRANSLATION OF THE ARCADE GAME OF THE SAME NAME. YOU MUST GUIDE MOONLIGHT THROUGH THE SEVEN STAGES AS YOU TRY TO FIND AND ANNIHILATE THE EVIL NINJA WHO MURDERED YOUR FATHER.



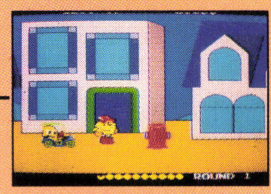
ORDYNE

KUBOTA, THE LEADER OF AN OUTER-SPACE GANG, HAS KIDNAPPED MISS KANA, WHO JUST HAPPENS TO BE THE FIANCÉE OF DR. TOMARI, THE INVENTOR OF THE NUCLEAR REACTOR ORDYNE. LITTLE DOES KUBOTA KNOW, THE KEY TO THE REACTOR IS HANGING AROUND MISS KANA'S NECK. THAT'S WHERE YOU COME IN. YOU CAN CONTROL EITHER THE GOOD DOCTOR OR HIS ASSISTANT, FELIX, THROUGH THE SEVEN STAGES IN AN ATTEMPT TO SAVE MISS KANA, BEFORE KUBOTA FINDS OUT EXACTLY HOW MUCH POWER HE HOLDS IN THE PALM OF HIS HAND.



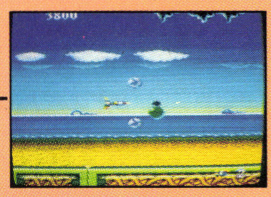
PAC-LAND

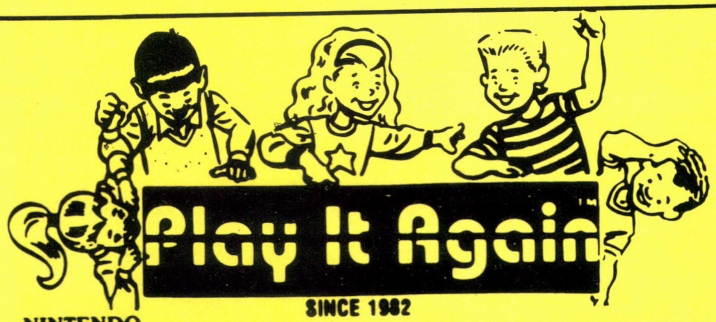
OH NO—A FAIRY PRINCESS IS TRAPPED BY MONSTERS IN PAC-LAND. BUT THAT'S OKAY, BECAUSE ONE OF THE MOST RECOGNIZABLE VIDEO GAME CHARACTERS, PAC-MAN, IS ON THE JOB. GUIDE PAC-MAN AS HE JOURNEYS OVER RIVERS, PAST MOUNTAIN FACES, AND THROUGH FORESTS AND DESERTS IN A QUEST TO SAVE THE FAIRY PRINCESS. IT WON'T BE AN EASY TASK, NOT WITH MONSTERS HOT ON HIS TAIL TRYING TO PREVENT HIM FROM REACH THEIR HIDEOUT, MONSTER MANSION.



PSYCHOSIS

YOU INNOCENTLY LET YOUR MIND WANDER TO THE EVIL SIDE OF ITS OWN EXISTENCE. YOU DIDN'T MEAN ANYTHING BY IT, YOU JUST WANTED TO TAKE A PEEK AT THE OTHER SIDE. BUT THE DEVIL UGAR HAS OTHER PLANS—HE PLANS TO BE YOUR KEEPER. YOU CAN'T THINK, YOU CAN'T CRY OUT, THE ONLY THING YOU CAN DO IS FIGHT. WITH THE INCREDIBLE FIGHTING SHIP YOUR MIND HAS CREATED, YOU'LL STOP AT NOTHING TO BE FREE AGAIN.





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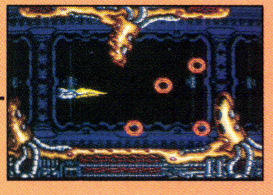
Sherlock Holmes: Consulting Detective

Using 50 live actors in a total of 150 scenes, Icom Simulations presents one the greatest detective series of all-time to the TG-16. Watch as Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson question suspects and witnesses for clues in three separate mysteries. You can check the complete map of London, an actual 19th-century *London Times* newspaper or even summons the Baker Street irregulars to get clues. Once you think you can solve the mystery, present your theory to a judge. If he accepts your theory then it's off to the next case; if not, it's back to the beginning to look for more clues.

Sinistron

Bio-morphic bio-battleship Sinistron is killing planets like it was going out of style, and it's headed right for Earth. As the only cybernaut left in our solar system, it's up to you to brave the inner workings of this rogue ship that's out of control. Destroy the brain before it takes out the entire galaxy.



Space Harrier

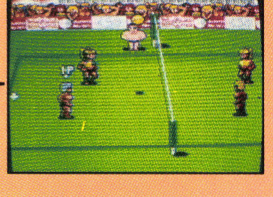
You're a space adventurer with a strong reputation for fighting evil to protect all that is good. This time it will be no different. Armed only with an autolock energy launcher and the special magical powers that are endowed to you, you face an evil force that now occupies Dragon Land, a once beautiful and peaceful planet in a galaxy far, far away.

Splatterhouse

As part of a college field trip, Rick (that's you) and his girlfriend, Jennifer, decide to study the experiments of the world's most renowned parapsychologist, Dr. West. The only problem is that no one has seen Dr.West in months. As the two slowly enter the house known better as Splatterhouse, there's a thud and the lights go out. When Rick turns around, Jennifer is gone. Now it's up to you to help Rick through seven of the most grueling, gruesome levels in video-game history.

Sonic Spike

In this four-player beach volleyball game, players can select one of the six teams representing the different countries competing in the tournament, as well as adjust the overall abilities of the teams' characters. You'll need a good strong team that has lots of speed, stamina, technique and jumping abilities if you want to find out who the mystery team really is.



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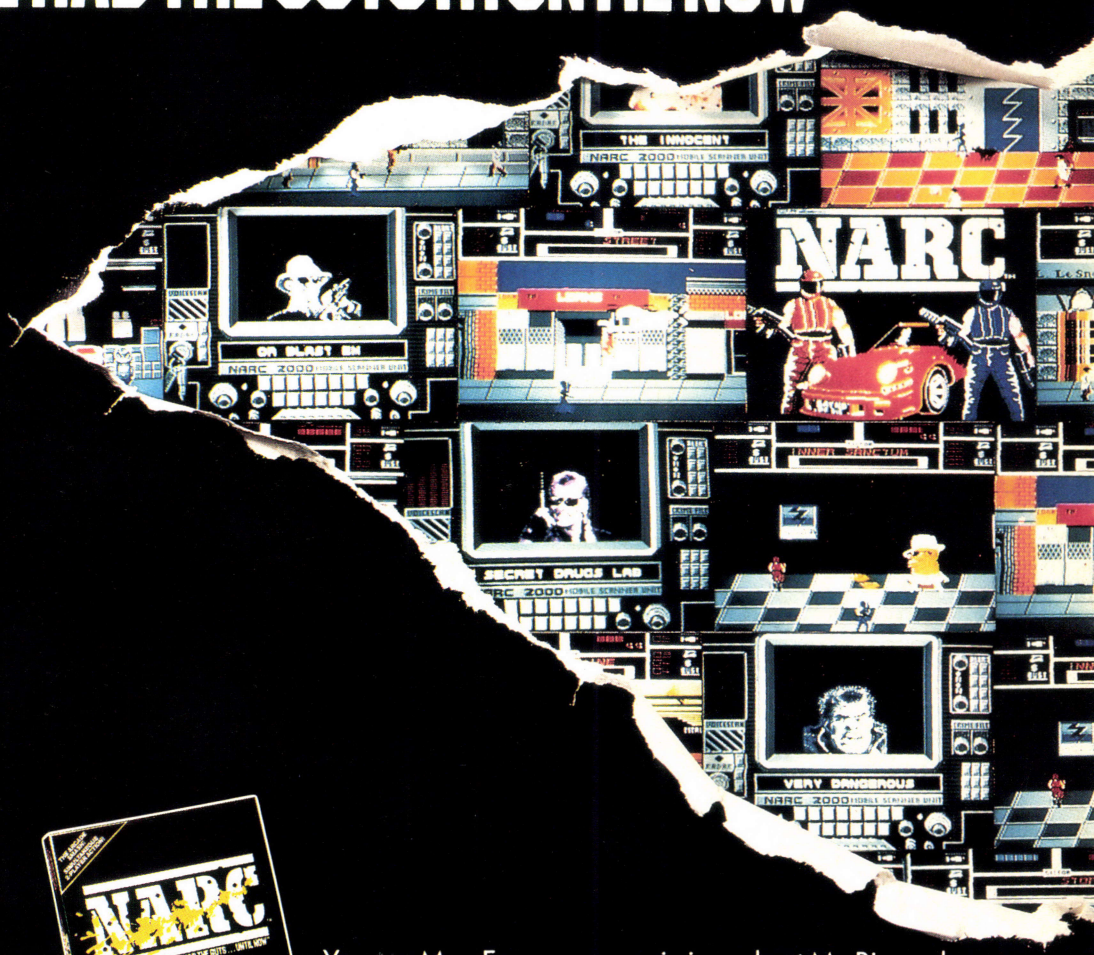

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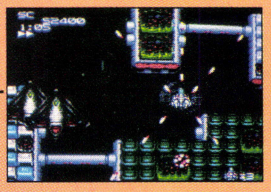
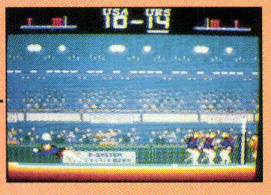
Super Star Soldier

Four long years ago, Ceasar, a strong, valiant warrior, defeated the vicious brain army. Now a new force, the Mother Brain, has reared its ugly head and is attacking. In response, they send you, Neo-Ceasar, to stop the rogue enemy invaders. Use the special weapons found along the way to single-handedly save the galaxy.



Super Volleyball

Super volleyball is one of the most comprehensive volleyball simulators on the market today. Featuring four different modes of play, this game allows a one- or two-player game, and lets you edit your team players' statistics or watch other teams pass rockets over the net for a while. You can change your serve, utilize four various forms of attacks and even make diving saves.

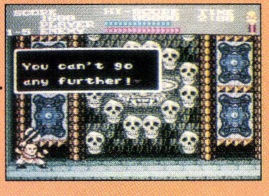


Takin' It to the Hoop

Be ready to use all your skills and the strategy of real basketball as you select one of eight teams from around the nation to compete in tournament, league play or an exhibition game. Whether you're playing a zone, man-to-man or a combination of these defenses, you'll still need to know when to go for the steal and when to change players as they grow tired. Play a one-player game or join a friend as you compete for the championship.

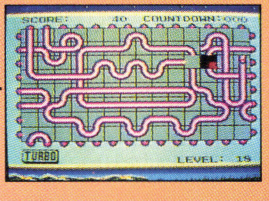
Tiger Road

When the priests of the Oh-Lin Temple heard that the Dragon God attacked and abducted the children of the village, they hurried to help save them. Once they reached the village, they were ambushed by the Dragon God's henchmen and quickly defeated—which leaves only you, Lee Wong, master of the ultra-secret Oh-Lin Temple "double-headed tiger" fighting technique, to defeat the Dragon God and save the children.



Timeball

In this game for strategy buffs, you must adjust the configuration of various tubes so that a ball will travel through each one. The constantly advancing sphere and the assortment of twisting tube pieces are just a few of the obstacles thrown your way. You can create your own maze or try to complete the 100 rounds of play.



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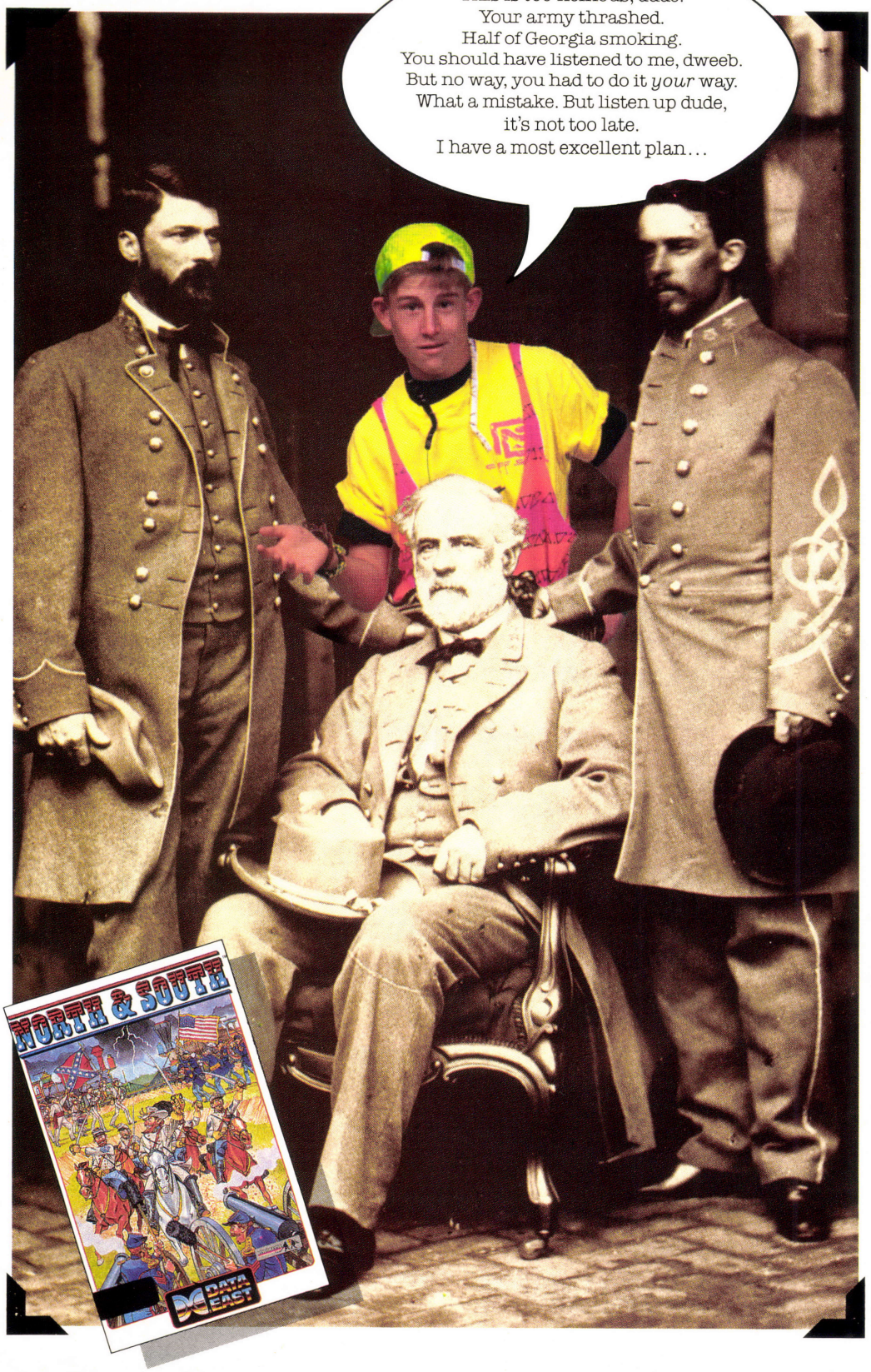
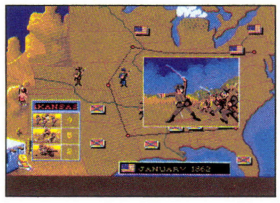


So, you think you'd make an awesome leader? Prove it. With North & South,™ the hot new action strategy game with a twist.

What'll you be? A Yankee general? A Confederate commander? Choose one — and make a radical change to Civil War history!

Realistic graphics and sound guarantee action to the max. Friendly icon interface makes controlling your soldiers a breeze.

Take the challenge, if you think you're good enough. You'll need screeching speed and a masterful mind. Can you do it? Do you have the guts to try? North & South from Data East. It's one radical game.



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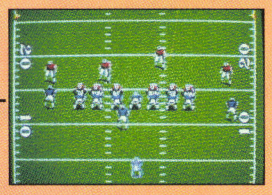
CIRCLE #160 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

Tricky Kick

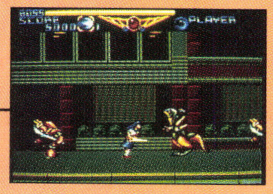
This brain-teasing chess-like game offers the puzzle theme in a unique way. There are six different heroes trapped in their own mazes. Each one has ten different levels (for a total of 60 in the game) and its own storyline. The object of the game is to rid the maze of certain enemies by bashing them into extinction. To clear a level, you must kick matching enemies into each other, which removes them from the playfield.

TV Sports: Football



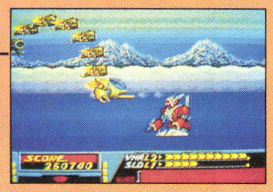
In a direct translation of the computer game, Cinemaware presents one of the best selling sports games on the TurboGrafx-16. *TV Sports: Football* has every aspect of real gridiron action from the pregame show to a marching band at halftime to updates from around the league. With the optional TurboTap, up to five players can play in the 16-game season and choose to play any position including coach.

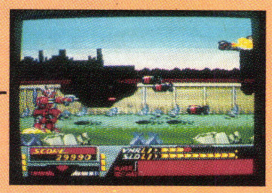
Valis II



Long ago, the kind and generous King Rogress ruled the ancient land of Vecanti. That ended when the beloved king died. As the people mourned his death, an evil army, led by the emperor Magus, attacked and defeated the loyal followers of King Rogress. The country soon sank into a sea of despair—that is until a young maiden named Yuko accepted the challenge. With your help (and the Sword of the Kingdom) the evil emperor is doomed and peace can be restored to the kingdom.

Veigues Tactical Gladiator



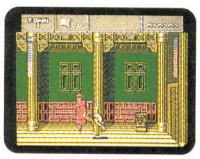


Mysterious invaders have attacked and destroyed all the cities along the pacific coast. Their fighting strength goes beyond anything known to this planet, even in the year 2321. Every weapon that the federation army has launched against this awesome foe has been struck down like a child's toy. Does this spell the end of mankind as we know it? Not if you have anything to do with it, as you control Veigues through ten of the most intense action-packed rounds ever made for the TG-16.

Y's—Book I & II

In the land of Y's, the treasured black pearl contained a special magic that allowed the people to live in a world of peace and prosperity. Suddenly, one day it all changed. The black pearl was now a source of great evil, as death and destruction ruled the land. Seven hundred years passed before a young man named Adol stepped forward to fulfill his destiny. To defeat Boss Darm, the keeper of the black pearl, Adol must locate the six historical books of Y's and return them to the six powerful yet peace-loving priests that once ruled the land. Can you guide Adol to victory in one of the most incredible CD-ROM games ever created?

GET BIGGER KICKS FIGHTING PHANTOMS!



Phantom Fighter is the martial arts game with a *big* difference. It's the new action game that lets you chop and kick against ghostly enemies with supernatural powers! These zombie phantoms get even bigger and stronger as your skill improves. (But don't worry—you've got some magic of your own.) You'll be challenged by some tricky questions. Ghosts, puzzles, and dialogue make this Kung Fu challenge more unpredictable. Get your kicks with Phantom Fighter!

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CIRCLE #161 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

GIFTS for Gamers

Holiday Suggestions for High-Tech Hobbyists

Compiled by Joyce Worley With Becky Shayne

It's gift-giving (and getting) season again, the time of year for new gimmicks and gewgaws. VG&CE's letter to Santa lists lots of goodies guaranteed to light up the face of that favorite joystick jockey or mouse master on your holiday list.

Dear Santa, please stuff my stocking with things to protect all of my high-tech equipment and games.

NES carts need special storage, to prevent clutter and protect them from dust. Suncom has two roll-top storage units for NES game carts. Docking Bay 10 holds ten games and retails for $12.99, while Docking Bay 20 holds 20 cartridges and retails for $24.99. Both units are color-coordinated to match the Nintendo Entertainment System.

The Road Warrior Rainbow Disk Wallet, by Computer Products Plus (Huntington Beach, California, [800] 274-4227), was made to carry diskettes in a briefcase or luggage. The wallet is a three-fold pouch with six inner pockets constructed of Cordura Nylon and a Velcro sealing strip that holds up to a dozen 3.5-inch computer disks. It's sold with six multicolored diskettes for $24.95 or without the disks for $9.95.

Beware the dreaded spilled coffee, the dusty winds; they're computer killers. It makes sense to protect your equipment with a high-tech protective cover. Abcom (Bishop, California, [619] 872-1946) makes dust covers for over 700 models of computers and printers. Each is custom-fitted and waterproof, made of anti-static nylon pack cloth, the same kind that protects camping gear. They wipe clean with a damp sponge. The covers are available in navy and silver and make fine gifts for high-tech friends. Prices vary depending on computer style and range from $6.95 to $24.95.

Dear Santa, please bring something to clean my equipment and keep it working right.

Geneva Group (Plymouth, Minnesota, [612] 546-5620) promises to keep equipment tidy without damaging the Earth's ozone layer. The Super Blast air duster is an ozone-safe product, propelled with a nonflammable, nontoxic formula. Air expels at a steady velocity though a pinpoint nozzle, to blow dirt out of keyboards and video-game slots. The VR-109 Super Blast is available for $10.99 in most game stores. The company also makes a manual cleaner for CD-ROM disks and a CD lens cleaner. The Manual Compact Disk Cleaner uses chamois pads and a special cleaning solution and comes with a no-scratch holding pad. The Turbo Disc CD Lens Cleaner uses air turbulence, so no brushes or components actually touch the lenses. It chimes during the process and shuts off automatically when the cleaning is finished.

Philips Computer Electronics (Knoxville, Tennessee, [615] 521-4499) has a maintenance system for personal computers. System SBM10007X01 includes special head-cleaning material; 3.5- and 5.25-inch cleaning diskettes; cleaning solutions for your CRT, disk drives, keyboard and printer platen; swabs; towelettes and a complete instruction manual. The dual drive computer-care combo kit retails for $49.95.

Philips' SBM1003A01 Dot Matrix & Impact Printer Cleaning System includes a one-ounce bottle of cleaning solution, two platen cleaning handles and a sheet of printer head-cleaning material. It retails for $19.95. The SBM1002A01 Keyboard & Plastic Cleaning Kit has a four-ounce bottle of cleaning solution, 12 foam-tipped swabs and 25 fabric wipes, for $19.95. It is guaranteed to dry quickly, with no sticky residue.

Dear Santa, please bring me some nifty odds and ends.

J-Bar Assoc. (Southboro, Massachusetts, [508] 485-0878) is selling the MacBit Bucket for $3.95. It comes in red, ivory or gray and features a flat back to adhere to the side of your monitor. It provides convenient storage for pens, pencils, maps, instruction pamphlets and all the clutter that accumulates next to your computer.

Hunt Data Products has an accessory that puts an end to those map-in-the-lap blues experienced by adventure gamers who don't have three hands. The MediaMate CopyHolder holds maps, instruction cards or any other data that needs to be visible, leaving the gamer's hands free for fun. It attaches to any monitor, and a roller bar holds documents securely. It has three height settings and adjusts left or right to suit individual taste. It's available at most computer stores or from Hunt Data Products ([800] 446-7823).

The Marstek Hand Scanner (Marstek, Inc., Irvine, California, [714] 833-7740) will dress up your gaming fanzine with pictures and photographs. It turns any piece of art into a computer document, which can then be sized up or down or otherwise manipulated by paint-box programs. The scanner handles 64 levels of gray-scale image reproduction and features 800 dpi (dots per inch) resolution. It also contains a special inverse-image function and 12 halftone patterns.

Dear Santa, please bring me some portable fun for when I'm away from home.

Acclaim's (Oyster Bay, New York, [516] 922-2400) SuperPlay Handheld game line has been expanded. The latest palm-players are NARC, BigFoot, IronSword: Wizards & Warriors II, Arch Rivals, The Simpsons *and* Total Recall. *Each is $19.95.*

NARC *is a miniature of the arcade game from Williams.* BigFoot *is a big truck event.* IronSword: Wizards & Warriors II *continues the adventures of Knight Kuros through a medieval fantasy.* Arch Rivals *is a basketball game, and* Total Recall *is based on the Arnold Schwarzenegger science fiction movie.* The Simpsons *features Bart and the rest of TV's favorite family.*

The small games use four-sided control rosettes. Each retails for $19.95. They feature high-score memory, realistic sound effects (which can be toggled off for quiet play), increasing difficulty levels and have an arcade-style continue mode. They work on two AA batteries (not included) and have automatic shut-off to save power when not in use.

The Illuminator (Greer & Associates, Hayward, California, [800] 426-5767) brightens up the Game Boy screen for play even in darkened rooms. It slides over the Game Boy for stability and then angles a tensor-rotating light, powered by two AA batteries, over the screen. The lamp folds down for compact storage. It's available for $19.95.

The LightBoy from Vic Tokai, Inc. (Torrance, California, [913] 326-8880), sheds light on the Game Boy screen. It clips on top of the Game Boy and angles a lighted magnifying glass over the machine to make the screen look bigger and brighter. It comes with a special shoulder/waist carrying case large enough to carry the Game Boy, the LightBoy and up to four game packs and lists for $24.95.

Saft (Valdosta, Georgia, [912] 247-2331) rechargeable batteries can put an end to the high cost of powering up your portables. A special gift pack, The Again & Again Rechargeable Battery System, includes a multiple-cell battery charger, six rechargeable batteries, (two AA, two C and two D), plus a $5 coupon to lower the cost after rebate to $9.99.

The MegaBoy Cleaning Kit, from Doc's High Tech Game Products (Rialto, California, [714] 873-1967), contains cleaning solution, cleaning cards, applicators, polishing wand and an illustrated manual for maintaining the Game Boy or Lynx.

High-tech playthings need safe storage. Doc's MegaLynx Protector stores the Lynx and up to nine games, plus earphones, cables and other peripherals. The padded case has a strap for over-the-shoulder, around-the-waist or handle carrying. Doc's MegaBoy Protector holds that system, plus six Game Boy cartridges, plus peripherals.

Dear Santa, please introduce me to some other game players.

Quantum Computer Services can fill the gamer's stocking with unlimited access to other players. Online services enable an individual to connect their computer, using a modem and phone line, to other users around the country. Services available to onliners include oodles of gaming information and programs to download, plus stock quotes, access to online encyclopedias, travel reservation services, news wires and dozens of special interest groups (SIGs). Real-time "chat lines" let users all over North America talk or play games with each other.

Quantum has online services for Apple/Macintosh, Commodore and IBM-PC computer users. PC and Commodore services (dubbed PC-Link and Q-link) cost $9.95 per month for unlimited use of basic services and 10¢ or 8¢ (respectively) per minute for chat lines after the first hour. Apple users join America Online for $6 per hour during evenings and weekends and $15 per hour on weekdays, with no monthly fees or surcharges. Promenade is for IBM-PS/1 computers and offers similar services, plus over 7,000 software titles for downloading. All services feature forums with software publishers and computer experts to provide tips, news and answers to individual questions.

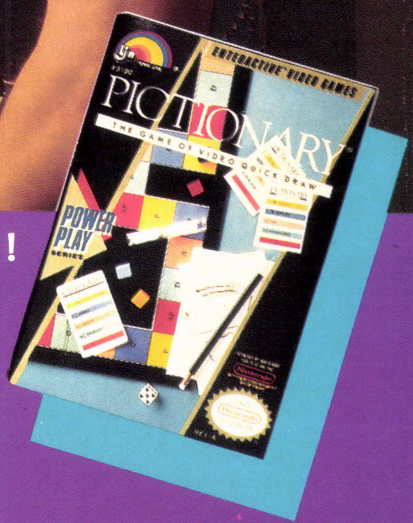
Disks and sign-up packets are available in software stores, or contact Quantum Computer Services, Vienna, Virginia, ([703] 448-8700).

The CP+ Telecoupler (Computer Products Plus, Huntington Beach, California, [800] 274-4227) keeps telecommunicators online even when they're not at home. It includes a receiving level switch that adjusts to varying line conditions, a power indicator (monitors the batteries), adjustable end pieces that fit varying phones and an RJ11 plug that connects to any modem.

The battery-powered acoustic Telecoupler weighs 10.4 ounces with its batteries and measures seven inches long. It moves data at 2400 baud and comes with a nylon carrying case, for $149.95.

PICTIONARY®: The first NES® game for *any* family!

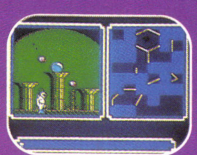
WILD ARCADE ACTION PLUS CLASSIC PICTIONARY FUN!



An NES® game that *everyone* in the family will enjoy playing? Not *your* family you say? Wait 'til you play LJN's Pictionary!

Four thoroughly addictive arcade-type games will challenge the NES® champ in your family. The higher the score before the clock runs out, the more the hidden picture is revealed. Here's where the Pictionary fans take over, trying to identify the object before *their* time runs out.

Most videomaniacs will want to hog Pictionary all to themselves for the arcade action. Others might choose to play the electronic version of the legendary board game. Better yet, everyone can join in on the fast-paced, video quick-draw super arcade action together. So, get ready for Pictionary like it's never been played before.



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CIRCLE #104 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

Dear Santa, please help me "Deck My Halls."

Give a greeting to the world with a large-sized banner for your window or wall. Brøderbund's Bannermania (IBM PC, Macintosh $59.95) prints out messages for special, large-sized announcements. There are 34 special effects, such as shadows, perspective and 3-D; 27 shapes (arch, convex, ribbons, pennants, etc.); 19 type fonts, 28 special characters (hearts, arrows, flags); 50 ready-to-use designs; and easy resizing.

The program also makes bumper stickers, signs and posters, in color (with color printers) or shades of gray. It's the best way to let the neighbors know what's going on, whether you're advertising a rummage sale, celebrating a birthday or wishing a happy holiday to the world.

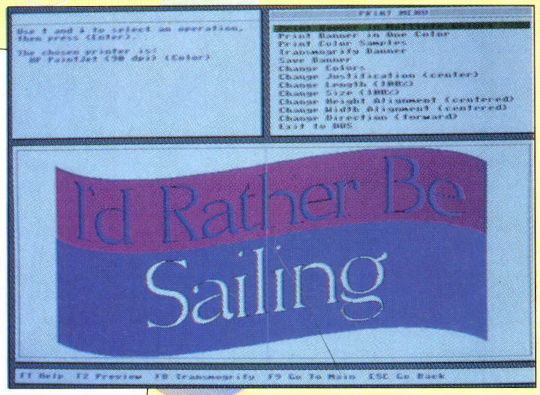
Here's an unusual gift idea: put yourself on disk, in VGA image. Integrated Concepts (Redding, California, [916] 246-9013) will digitally translate your favorite photo (either color or black & white) and put it on a data disk, so you can boot it up anytime or send it as a very special greeting for computing friends. The process costs $19.95 and works for IBM with a VGA monitor.

Special seasonal disks introduced in past years still deserve holiday attention. They are off the publishers' active lists and might be hard to locate, but they're guaranteed to add to your yuletide joy.

The Christmas Box (Activision for most systems) guides computerists through the creation of Christmas decorations, tree ornaments, gift boxes and other holiday novelties. This special collection (designed by Carol "Home Town" Manley, Manley & Assocs.) will keep the whole family "elfing it up," as they use the clip art and designs to create wreaths, reindeer, toy soldiers, trains and even a small Dickens village. It's easy enough for young children with minimal parental supervision to use.

The Toy Shop (Brøderbund for Macintosh) has 20 different projects on disks, with hundreds of possible variations. The computerist can construct three-dimensional models, such as automobiles, trucks, steam engines, clockwork bank and a scale model of the Spirit of St. Louis. Every model "works." The steam engine is balloon-powered, the clockwork bank runs on pennies; the rubber band-powered helicraft soars through the air, and the medieval catapult hurls missiles. The projects are fairly demanding and are recommended for older children or adults.

Finally, Jingle Disk (Hi Tech for Atari, Commodore 64, Apple) is a greeting card on disk, complete with clever rhymes, animations and holiday music. This hard-to-find classic program is the all-time best seller of seasonal disks. Using Jingle Disk the computerist can design personalized animated greetings on disk to send to computing friends, which they will be able to boot without the original program.



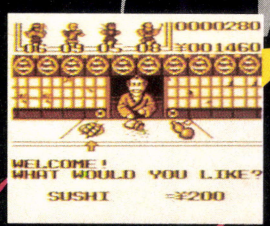
Dear Santa, please help me learn more about computing.

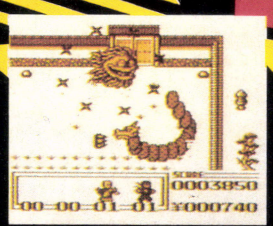
The 1990 edition of *Sourcebook*, $39.95, (Infinite Automata, Las Vegas, Nevada, [702] 735-1800) compiles information about companies and professionals in the home software industry. It contains listings of publishers, development groups, designers, programmers, artists, agents, musicians, writers and all the other professionals in the industry and also lists publications and sources for development tools and code libraries.

Webster's New World Dictionary of Media & Communications, $29.95 (Prentice Hall Trade, New York, New York, [212] 373-8234) is a collection of over 30,000 technical terms and computing jargon. The new dictionary defines such terms as "window," "mouse" and "scrolling," lists animation terms and provides correct usage for such commonly misspelled words as "cel." Along with the computer graphic and videotex terms, it covers vocabularies used in broadcasting, direct marketing, exhibitions, film, graphic arts, marketing, public relations, publishing, recording, theater and other communications fields.

Let's Get Mercenary!

mercenary FORCE™





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Over one hundred years ago during the mighty Shogun Era, the Lord of Darkness sent his fearsome army to terrorize the Japanese countryside. Using the Dark Lord's powerful magic, his evil minions spread famine, plague, and pestilence wherever they went, leaving the peaceful population hopelessly oppressed. It's up to you to recruit a lethal Mercenary Force from a band of deadly warriors and free the country from the Dark Lord's ruthless reign of terror.

Now Nintendo® Game Boy™ players can get mercenary with Meldac's completely new type of action/shooting game, MERCENARY FORCE. Voted one of the top 10 game introductions in 1990 by Japan's Game Boy Club Magazine, Mercenary Force brings superior graphics and incredible stereo sound to Game Boy™ software. So if you have a head for strategy and a body for action, what are you waiting for? **Let's Get Mercenary!**

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Suite 2210
Los Angeles, CA 90067

For more information please contact:
National Sales Department
Telephone: 213/286-7040
Fax: 213/286-7039

CIRCLE #162 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

Dear Santa, please bring me some new gaming toys.

Arch Rivals (Playtime Products) is an electronic pinball based on the arcade game. The company also has hand-held versions of *Spy Hunter, Rampage* and *Atlantis* ($17).

Playtime's four-way-control hand-held electronic games for young sports enthusiasts are housed in triangular casings. The games are *Soccer, Tennis, Baseball* and *Football.*

Playtime also has flipper games based on the Nintendo heroes. *Triple Flipper Electronic Pinball* boasts triple-flipper controls, digital scoring, and a realistic playfield and backboard ($48). For younger folks, Nintendo *Super Mario Bros. Shoot and Score* and Nintendo *Super Mario Bros. Mario's Revenge* are target games that require the gamer to flip balls into the correct pockets. Both are priced at about $43.

World of Nintendo departments stock cool gaming gifts. There are Nintendo sweats, jackets, hats, key chains, bath towels, wristwatches, umbrellas, cassette players and even Nintendo-inspired chairs, TV-tables and bean-bags. The mini-stores are stuffed with Nintendo storage devices, wall clocks, controllers, mugs, kites, calendars, pens and pencils. There's even food: candy bars and ice cream, plus a full line of party supplies, including paper plates, cups and napkins. And, of course, they also have Nintendo T-shirts, buttons and badges.

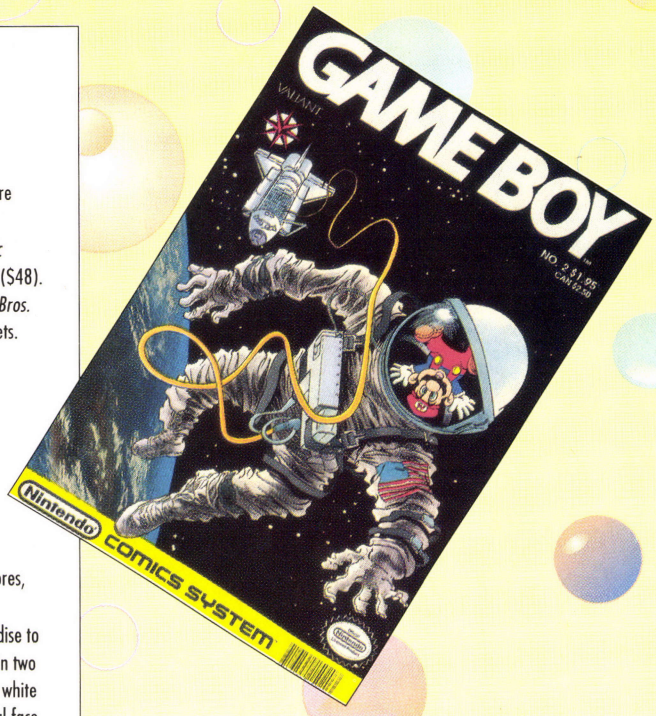
There are scads of World of Nintendo headquarters. You'll find them in department stores, kids shops, Sears, Toys "R" Us, Woolworth and about six dozen other locations.

Brøderbund (San Rafael, California, [415] 492-3200) has *Carmen Sandiego* merchandise to bring a smile to computerists. The Carmen Sandiego Watch with sweep second hand comes in two styles, both shock and water resistance. The classic large-dial watch has a black band and a white face with a shadowy image of Carmen. The petite dial watch has a white band and a colorful face with a picture of Carmen peering out. Both retail for $24.95.

There are also Carmen posters ($5), stickers (eight for $2.50) and a nifty 9" by 12" two-pocket folder ($1.50). The Carmen sweatshirt ($16.95) is white with a large Carmen picture on the chest, and Carmen T-Shirts ($9.95) feature the famous *Where Is Carmen Sandiego?* logo.

Mario and other top Nintendo video-game characters star in a series of comic books published by Voyager Communications, Inc., (New York, New York, [212] 366-4900). VCI has a line of Nintendo-themed comics: *Super Mario Bros., Captain N: The GameMaster, Zelda* and *Game Boy* are each 32-page monthlies. The 64-page *Nintendo Comic System* contains five stories and features. There's also a special *Super Mario Brothers,* a $1.95 book sold through comic book specialty stores.

All books are in full color and printed on thick paper similar to that featured in *Nintendo Power* magazine. The size is a little bigger than the current comics industry standard, more like the comics of the 1940s. The comic books are available in most stores which sell Nintendo hardware, accessories and games.



Please Santa, bring me some add-ons to make my machines do even more.

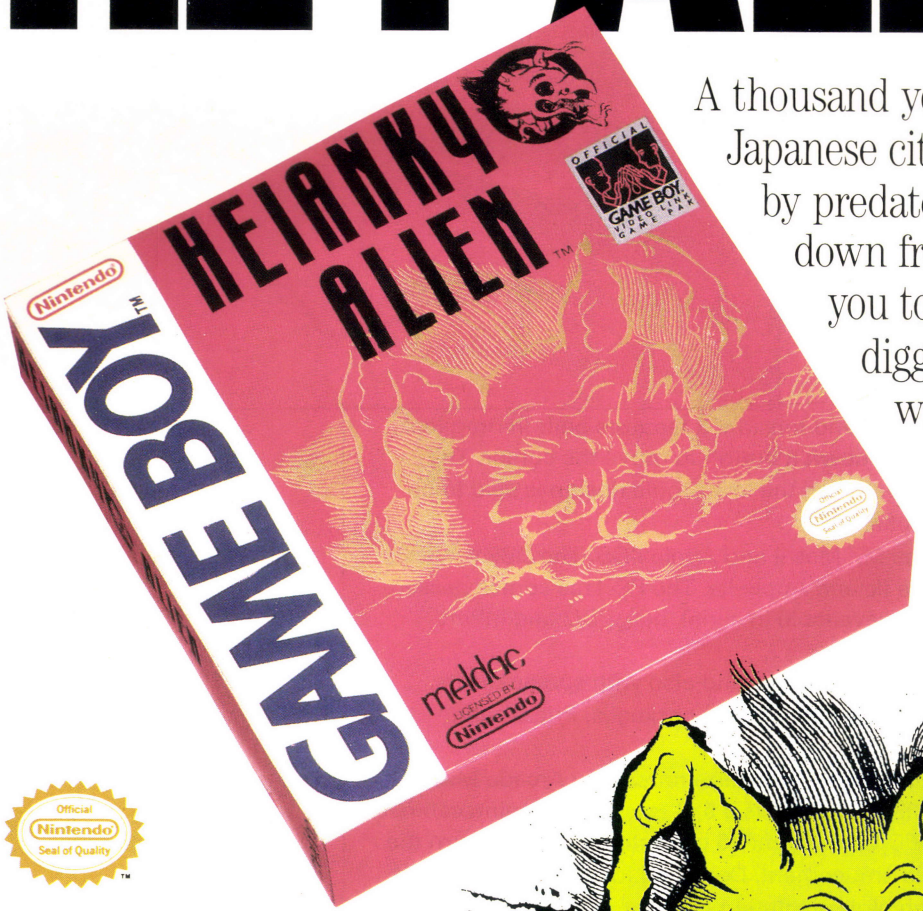
Software Toolworks' Miracle Keyboard is a fully touch-sensitive electronic instrument with a MIDI interface and keys as large as a Steinway grand piano. A special program allows it to mate with a regular Nintendo Entertainment System in a two-way connection. The user can either play the keyboard into the video-game system or channel the console's output through the keyboard. A "learn to play the piano" cartridge employs games and diagnostic tests to teach anyone to tickle the keys.

Covox's (Eugene, Oregon, [503] 342-1271) music/sound enhancement card for PCs ($119.95) is supported by many microcomputer software developers. Over 60 major developers and publishers have received kits to incorporate sound files for the Sound Master PC into upcoming titles. Recent titles that support the sound board include IBM and compatible versions of Windwalker *from Origin,* SimCity *by Maxis and* Monday Night Football *by Data East.*

Walt Disney's Sound Source produces digitized speech, music and sound effects for IBM-PC and compatible computers. The $35 system, produced for Disney by Electronic Speech Systems of California, attaches to the printer port, then amplifies sound through its own three-inch speaker. The first products to use the Sound Source are three preschool products, Mickey's 123s, Mickey's ABCs *and* Mickey's Colors and Shapes.

ICD Inc. (Rockford, Illinois, [815] 968-2228) has a two-module system for adding up to six megabytes of internal memory to the Commodore Amiga 500 computer. The first module, AdRAM 540, adds up to four megabytes of RAM to the system and fits in the A501 expansion port. It comes with a special feature so users can add an additional 512K of chip RAM; this feature requires some modifications to the computer. AdRAM 540 also comes with a battery-backed clock that holds the date and time even when the computer is off. The second module, AdRAM 560D, has two megabytes of RAM built in. It plugs directly into the AdRAM 540, to increase the internal RAM to six megabytes.

HEY ALIEN!



A thousand years ago, the ancient Japanese city of Kyoto is threatened by predatory aliens which swoop down from the sky. It is up to you to repel the attack—by digging underground traps in which to bury the monsters alive!! But when? And where? That's for you to decide!!

HEIANKY4 ALIEN

(HĀY – YÙNK – KYŌ)

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- This legendary Japanese best-selling video sensation is now a GAME BOY!
- Multi-Matrix Sound System for High-Tech Audio!
- New Two-Player Mode Doubles The Possibilities!
- Both Original And Updated Versions In Single Game Cartridge!

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CIRCLE #163 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

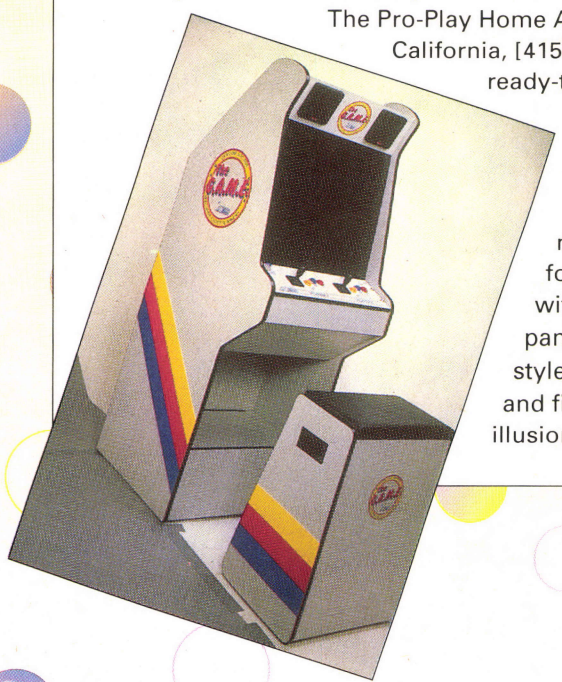
Dear Santa, please bring me some gadgets to make game playing even more fun.

There's nothing like a trackball to make game play even more fun. MicroSpeed (Fremont, California, [415] 490-1403) has a great trackball for Apple, Amiga, IBM PC and Mac computers. MacTrac takes up less than four inches of space and requires no mouse pad to operate. The ergonomic design is said to reduce wrist strain and tension. It features built-in drag lock, so the gamer doesn't have to hold down a button to move the cursor. The action buttons wrap around the ball, and the low profile design is said to be more comfortable than any mouse.

MacTrac ADB works with Mac SE, Mac II and Apple IIGS. The DB9 versions works with Mac, MacPlus, Apple IIc and Apple IIe. The PC-Trac comes packed with a free copy of *Welltris* and is available in serial, bus, PS/2 and InPort versions. Am-Trac is for Amiga users.

The track ball controllers work with games and also with spreadsheets, word processors, desktop-publishing and graphic packages. Prices range from $99 to $139 depending on the version.

The G.A.M.E. (Genuine Arcade Machine Entertainment, by Arcade Masters, Inc., Cromwell, Connecticut, [203] 632-2523) is a 5' 8" gourmet gaming cabinet that houses a Sega Genesis, NEC TurboGrafx-16 or Nintendo NES, to turn the video game into an arcade-style amusement. Designed for gamers who want the best, it comes with a 19-inch high-resolution monitor, two pairs of controllers and a pair of Boston Acoustics 757 speakers. It contains a 20-watt stereo amplifier and has joystick connectors for all video-game units. It also has inputs for a CD player, tape deck, VCR or any other equipment. The deluxe game room accessory sells for around $2,000.



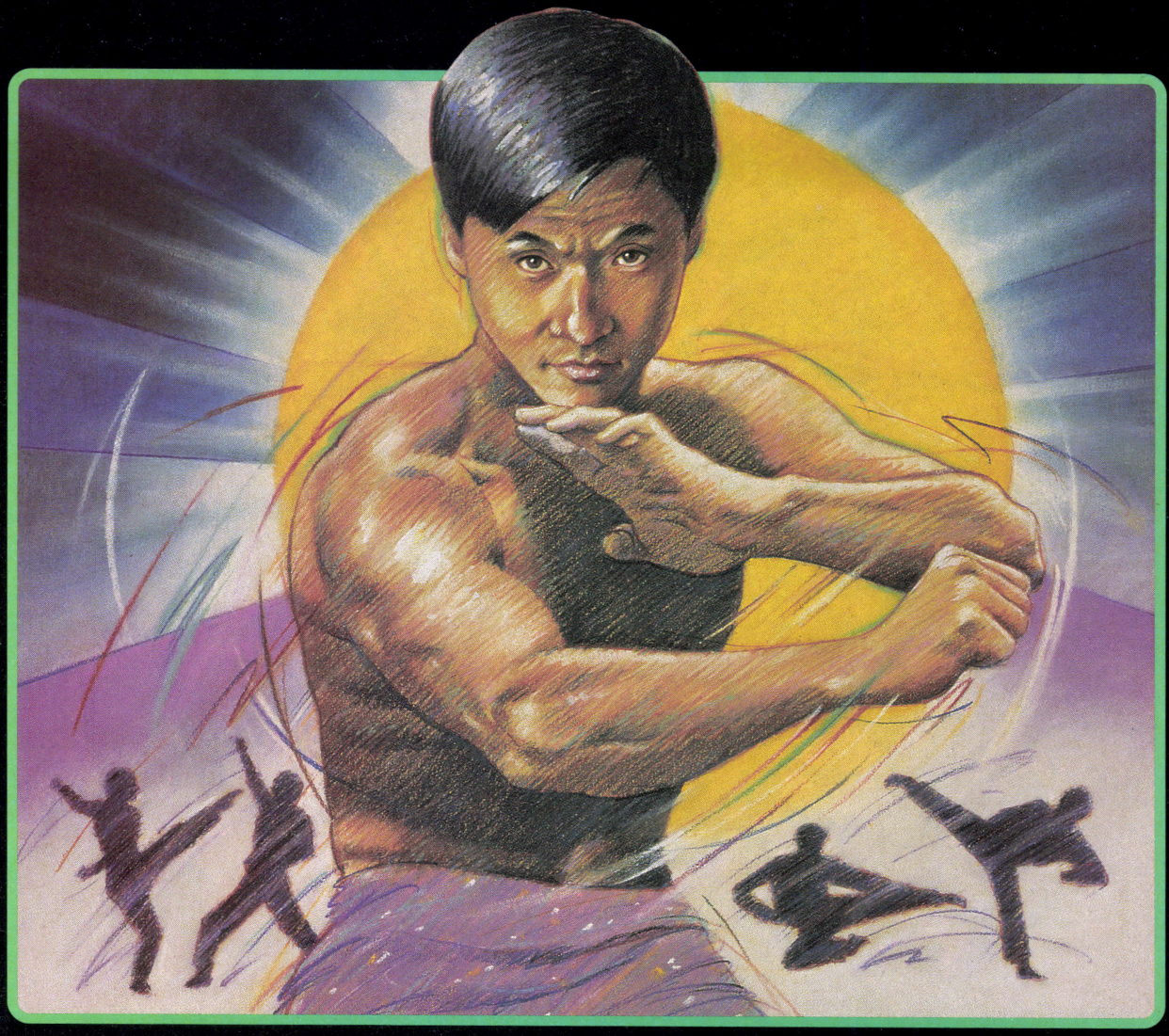
The Pro-Play Home Arcade (Eclectic Products, Los Altos, California, [415] 949-4983) is a realistically styled, ready-to-assemble cabinet for an Amiga, Atari computer, Commodore 64/128 or Sega game player. The upright cabinet looks very much like the ones in play-for-pay parlors, complete with flashy art on the side panels. A couple of arcade-styled Happ Control joysticks and fire buttons complete the illusion, for $199.95.

Dear Santa, please be sure to bring me some disks.

Fuji is giving away a sample of Lotus Magellan 2.0 hard-disk management utility program with each purchase of Fuji Film floppy disks. Specially marked boxes of Fuji 3.5-inch and 5.25-inch double-sided, high-density floppy disks include the new hard-disk management utility program. Magellan 2.0 helps users search and manage files across an entire hard disk, search smaller groups of files for specific information and compress files. A $25 consumer rebate coupon good toward the purchase of the complete program is also included. The 3.5-inch 11-pack is priced at $45.10; and the 5.25-inch 11-pack retails for $22.40.

Enjoy Hudson

JACKIE CHAN's ACTION KUNG FU™



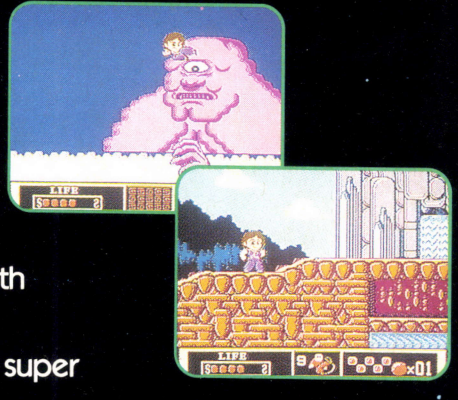
Ready... Set... POW!!! It's a Black Belt Blowout with JACKIE CHAN'S ACTION KUNG FU.™

Punch. Kick. Flip. Dive. Hurl fire bolts at legions of demons! Who knows? You just might last long enough to face the Prince of Sorcerers.

Battle your way past molten lava pits, creep by the skull and crossbones tomb, slay man-eating tigers!

And NO wimpy graphics. Everything's big, splashy, exploding with color through hundreds of levels!

JACKIE CHAN'S ACTION KUNG FU. Look for it wherever you buy super video games.



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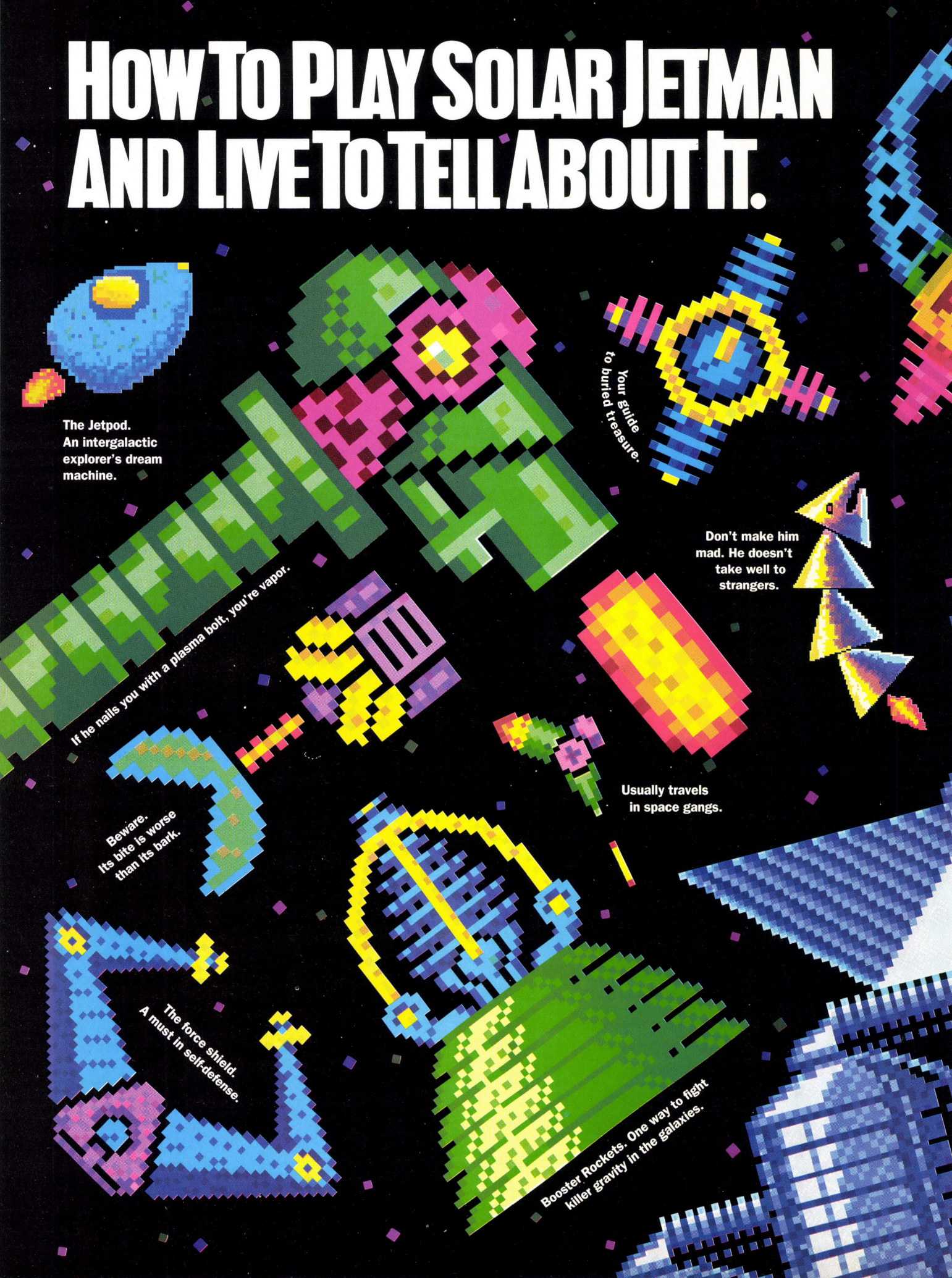
CIRCLE #164 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

HOW TO PLAY SOLAR JETMAN AND LIVE TO TELL ABOUT IT.



The main man himself.
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A thick-skinned fighting machine.
Welcome to the Mothership. Solar Jetman calls it home. It's also your ticket to 12 alien worlds hiding the Golden Warpship pieces. Bon voyage.
Alien with an attitude.
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THE GODS THEMSELVES

PART 3

A PLAYER'S GUIDE TO THE

BATTLE OF

OLYMPUS

BY CLAYTON WALNUM

Warning: If you already own The Battle of Olympus, *we suggest you play it before reading the information presented here. Studying our maps prematurely may decrease your enjoyment of the game. However, if you have yet to purchase* The Battle of Olympus, *it should be safe to browse through this article in order to decide if the game is something you'd enjoy. It's unlikely you'll remember many of the clues once you do start to play.*

At last! Gird your loins and pack up your equipment. We're about to take that fateful trip to the closing level's of Brøderbund's fascinating mythological adventure, *The Battle of Olympus*. On this final journey, we'll face more terrifying dangers than ever before. You're going to have to be a hot player to make it through to the underworld, where you'll battle for Helene's release from the forces of darkness. Do you have the stuff from which adventurers are made? Turn the page and let's find out!

FOR THE
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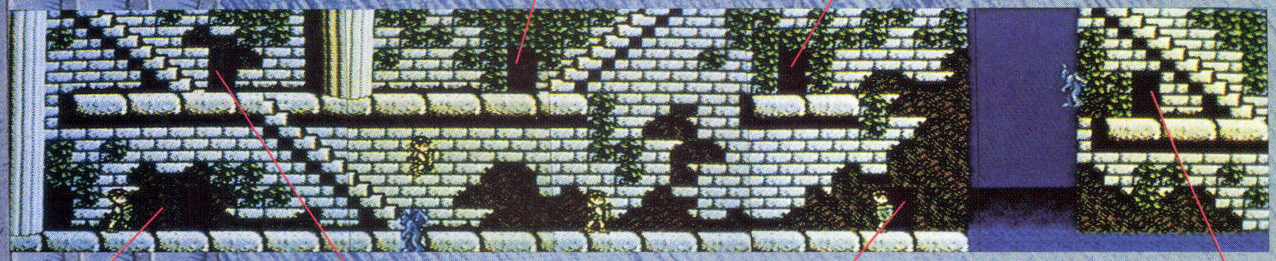
ILLUSTRATION BY JIM McDERMOTT
McDERMOTT 90

STRIP 19: PHYRGIA



Door 3 leads to Strip 22, Door 18.

Door 4 leads to Strip 22, Door 17.

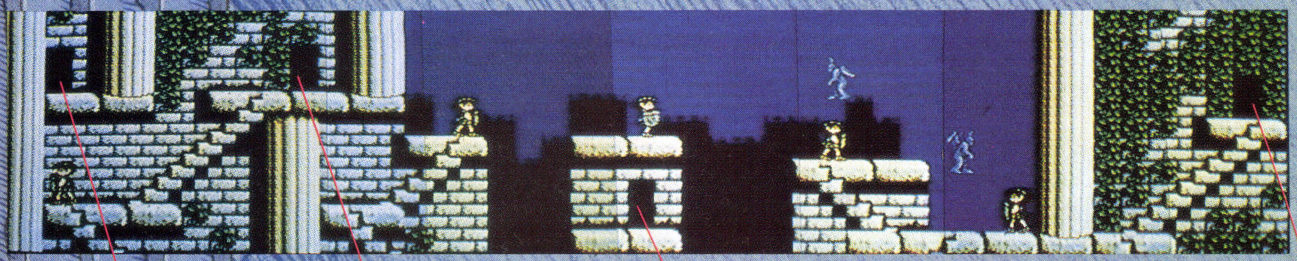
Door 1 leads to Strip 22, Door 19.

Door 2 leads to Strip 22, Door 20.

Door 5 leads to Strip 22, Door 16.

Door 6 leads to Strip 22, Door 15.

STRIP 21: PHYRGIA



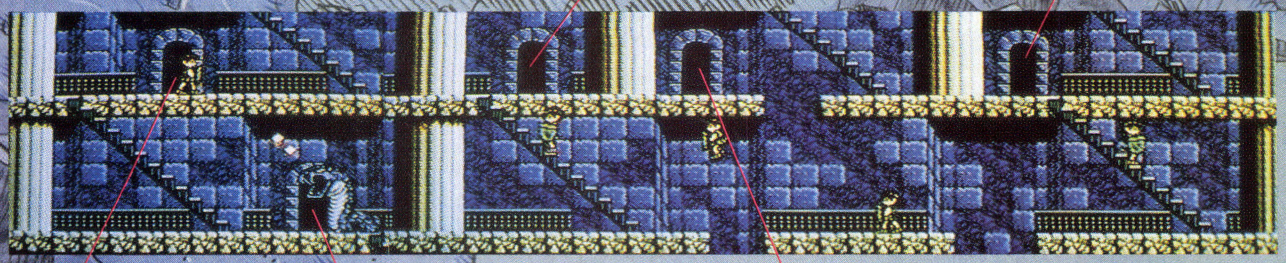
Door 11 leads to Strip 24, Door 29.

Door 12 leads to Strip 24, Door 28.

Door 13 leads to Strip 24, Door 27.

This door leads to the temple, where you can get the Moon Crystal.

STRIP 23: PHYRGIA



Door 23 leads to a magical fountain.

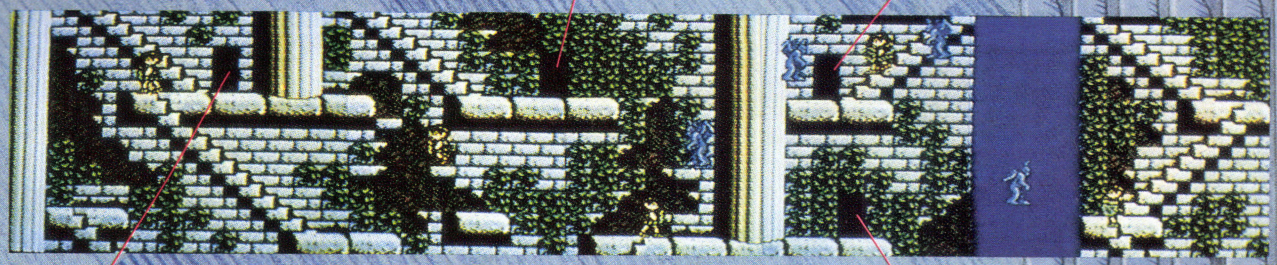
Door 25 leads to Strip 20, Door 7.

Door 22 leads to Strip 20, Door 9.

Door 21 leads to Strip 20, Door 10.

Door 24 leads to Strip 20, Door 8.

STRIP 20: PHYRGIA



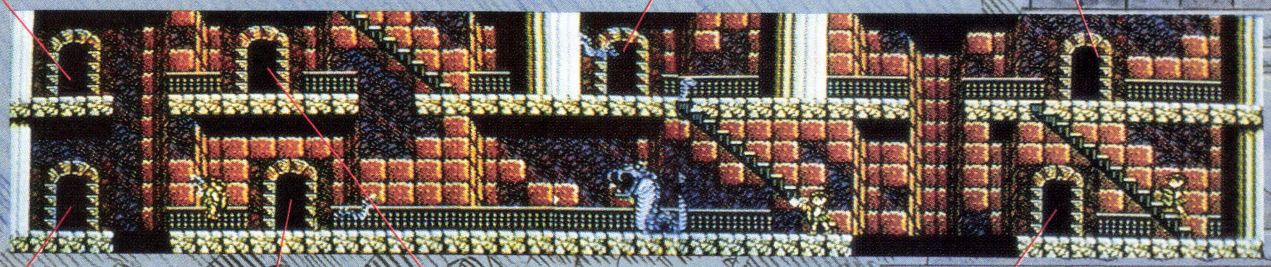
Door 8 leads to Strip 23, Door 24.

Door 9 leads to Strip 23, Door 22.

Door 7 leads to Strip 23, Door 25.

Door 10 leads to Strip 23, Door 21.

STRIP 22: PHYRGIA



Door 15 leads to Strip 19, Door 6.

Door 18 leads to Strip 19, Door 3.

Door 20 leads to Strip 19, Door 2.

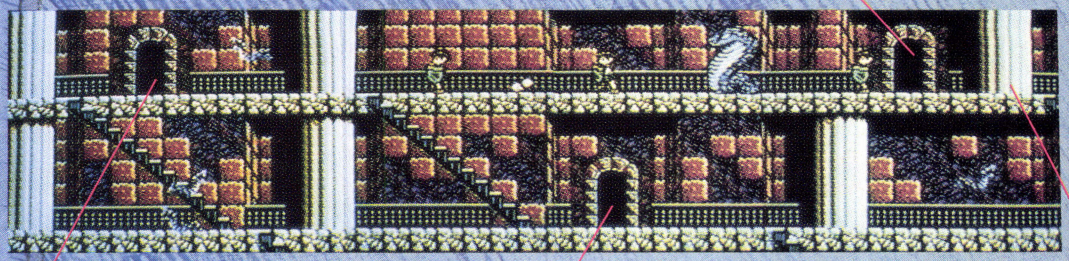
Door 14 leads out to the ocean and Argolis.

Door 17 leads to Strip 19, Door 4.

Door 19 leads to Strip 19, Door 1.

Door 16 leads to Strip 19, Door 5.

STRIP 24: PHYRGIA



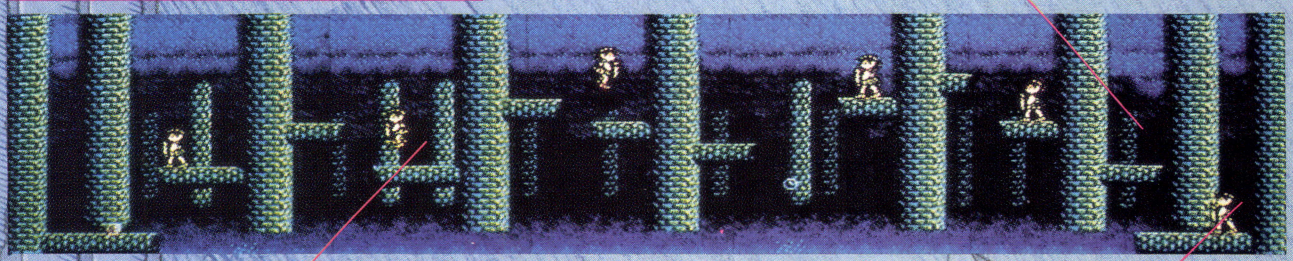
Door 28 leads to Strip 21, Door 12.

Door 26: In the room beyond, you can get another ambrosia.

Door 27 leads to Strip 21, Door 11.

Door 29 leads to Strip 21, Door 13.

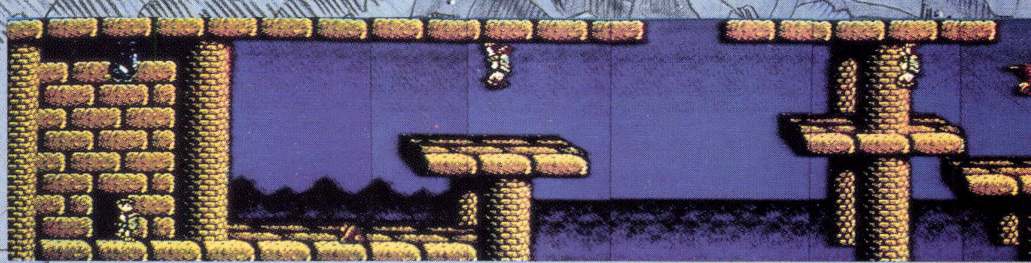
STRIP 26: TANTARUS



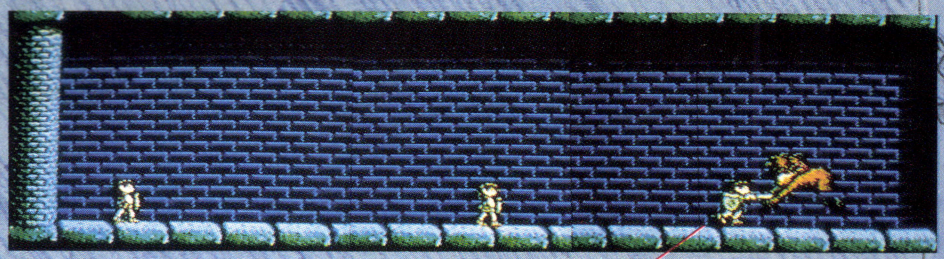
After you've explored this forest area, take this exit to the next forest area. The last exit there will take you to the first castle in Tantarus.

Explore all the exits between the trees. You never know what you may find.

This exit takes you directly to the mountains of Tantarus, but if you try it, you'll end up at a dead end.

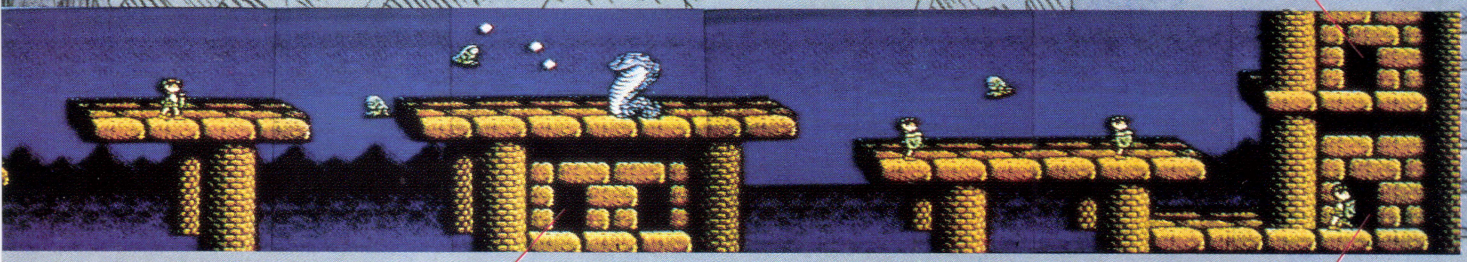


STRIP 25: TANTARUS



To kill the three-headed dog, you must hit it eight times in a row. If you miss even once, the dog will attack and its heads will grow back. This battle feat requires expert timing.

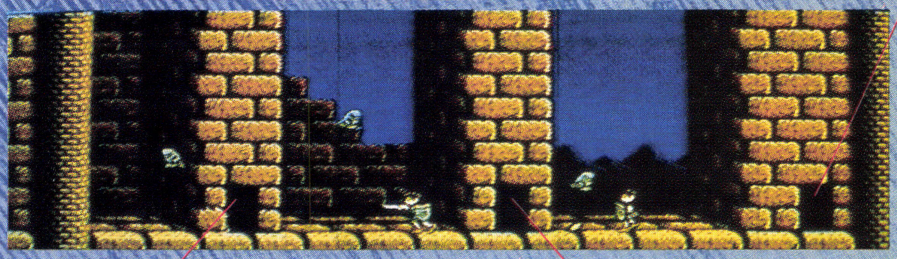
This door leads to the mountains of Tantarus, your last stop before the final castle.



Beyond this door a nymph will give you ambrosia.

This door takes you to Strip 28.

STRIP 28: TANTARUS

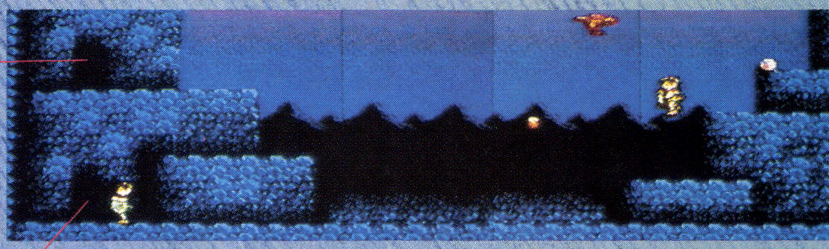


There's nothing but an empty room beyond this door.

This door leads back to Strip 27.

Take this door and you'll end up below the snake in Strip 27, where you can get ambrosia.

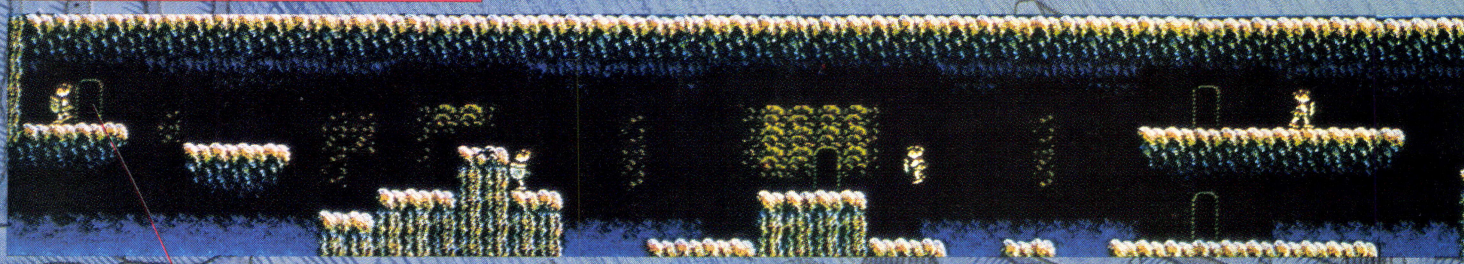
STRIP 29: TANTARUS



Take this door if you want to go to Argolis.

This door leads back to the forest.

STRIP 30: TANTARUS

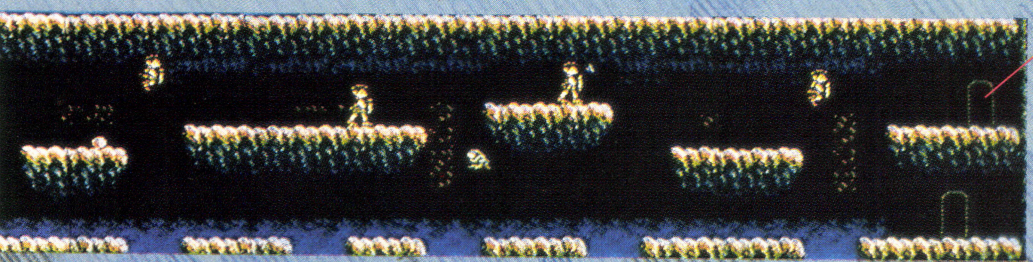


This door will take you to the mountains on your way to Argolis.

At last! Here's the entrance to the final castle. In the castle you must find your way through a maze of stairways. Eventually, you'll find the god Hades. You must beat him to rescue your girlfriend. At first, he's invisible.

Enter here to get to the right part of Strip 30.

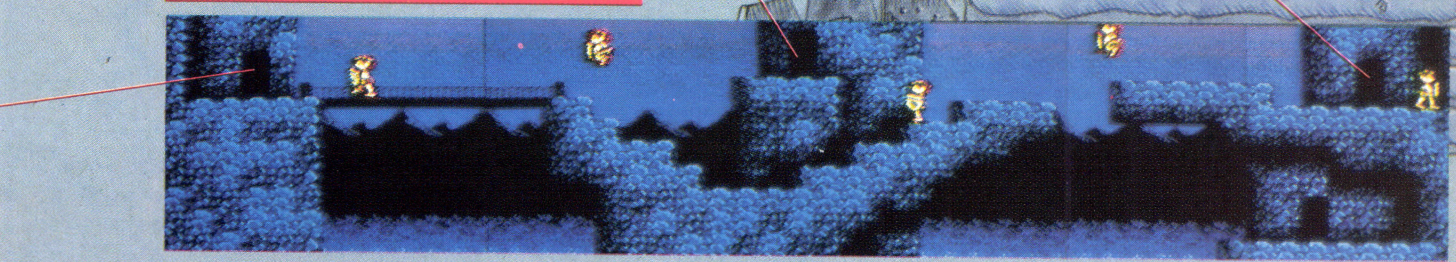
This is the exit you want. It leads to Strip 31.



Beyond this door a nymph will heal you.

Take this door if you want to go back to Strip 30.

STRIP 31: TANTARUS



JOYPAD JINXES ON LUGGABLE LYNXES

by
MAURICE MOLYNEAUX

Don't you Game Boy players panic. I'm not breaking last issue's promise of Game Boy reviews. Two of the three promised are here, with only *Gargoyle's Quest* left until next time. The reason for this change was that, just before deadline, I found some new Lynx games dropped in my lap, and, because Lynx owners haven't yet been flooded with titles for their machines, I thought I'd give them all a holiday "gift" by reviewing a couple of more new titles just in time for whatever holiday you're celebrating this season.

Road Blasters
Atari for the Lynx

I *hate* the idiotic stories that always get plugged into the manuals for these things—they try to be amusing, but fail miserably. This one's no different. If you buy the game, do yourself a big favor and skip the introduction. Go straight to the "Getting Started" section of the manual.

The manual's "story" notwithstanding, *Road Blasters* is a wonderfully faithful adaptation of the Atari coin-op hit of the same name.

This is a race-or-die sort of contest, where you not only have to try to complete each leg of the race, but gather fuel (in the form of globes zooming down the road on their own) along the way, at the same time dodging and/or destroying other vehicles. The view is sort of *Pole Position*-ish, from just above and behind your trusty car. The fuel this thing uses gets eaten up even sitting still, so don't spare the gas pedal! Driving 55 won't get you better economy; in fact, it'll result in your losing the game.

As you zip down the road, you'll have to duck mines on the pavement, rocks on the curbs and (nearly) invulnerable limousines, all the while shooting more combustible vehicles for points (and sometimes fuel). To aid you in your driving, a jet occasionally flies over and drops a special weapon, which, if you can catch it (just by moving under it), can help you. Special weapons include a U.Z. Cannon for blasting cars and gun turrets; an Electro Shield that allows you to plow through everything like it wasn't there; a Cruise Missile that "nukes" all opponents off the highway for miles ahead; and a Nitro Injector, which sends your car off at warp speed—or at least it *seems* that fast.

***Road Blasters* is a faithful re-creation of the Atari coin-op game, that takes the driving genre, a la *Pole Position*, into a highway battlefield.**

The graphics are outstanding, a near dead-ringer for the arcade version. The only problem is that the screen, being so small and with limited resolution, makes it harder to see things like mines in the road before it's too late. If you want to last more than five seconds when the mine warning sounds, slow down and drive carefully!

The sound is better than average, but not quite up to the Lynx's best. Although it features digitized voices, they aren't as clear as on the *Klax* cart for the Lynx, and the game's music isn't even the same as on the arcade machine.

The only real flaw in this game isn't the fault of the game itself, but involves the controller. The arcade version of *Road Blasters* features a steering wheel, permitting fine control of your car. The joypad, by comparison, allows you to either go straight or turn. Because there is no possibility of an in-between position with such a controller, it's exceedingly difficult to keep your car in one lane or even to line up on a target. Press the pad and the car angles in too sharply. Don't press it while turning a corner, and you risk some unexpected lane-changing and a likely crash. A little practice makes this problem less bothersome, but it certainly serves to illustrate the limitations of this common home video-game controller.

Duck Tales
Capcom for the Game Boy

I know, I know. How good can a game based upon a kid-vid program be? Actually, pretty good. This game, which is also available for the NES, does a pretty fair job of capturing some of the key elements of the *Duck Tales* program. You control Scrooge McDuck, the richest *duck* in the world—I want to know if there's another animal who's richer?—and embark on a series of adventures to add to his wealth, traveling to the four corners of the Earth and one corner of the Moon to boot. In each "land" there is a treasure to be had, and you must brave many dangers to obtain it. Of course, there's always a "boss" guarding the final prize, and you have to defeat him/her before you can claim it.

Naturally, your three helpful nephews, Huey, Dewey and Louie, are there to help you, as are Mrs. Beakly, Webby and your pilot, Launchpad. They assist you not so much by accompanying you, but by supplying you with clues or bonus food, or even a lift from one place to another. This is a pretty nonviolent game, so there's no "blasting." Scrooge eliminates most enemies by bouncing on their heads, using his cane like a pogo stick! This pogo action is also used to get Scrooge over tall obstacles and past chasms too wide for him to jump normally. There are all kinds of enemies, from mummies in Transylvania to snow bunnies in the Himalayas (not the kind you find when skiing).

Naturally, even when you clear all five lands and obtain all of the valuables, there's still one final challenge. Your greatest rival is out to get the treasures too, so get moving or all your efforts thus far will be for nothing!

The graphics and sound in this game merit special mention for surpassing the usual

continued on page 164

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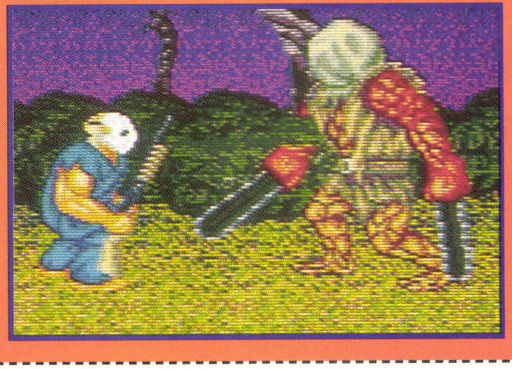

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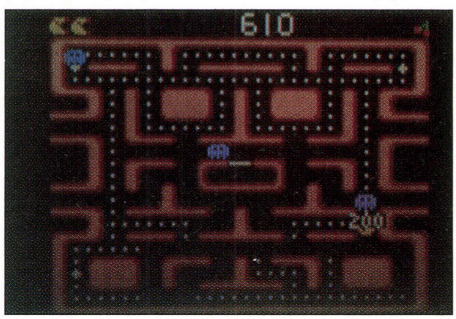
continued from page 160

standards of most Game Boy titles. There are different pieces of music for each land, in addition to a well-done adaptation of the *Duck Tales* theme music at the start of the game. The graphics are amongst the best I've seen on the Game Boy, with clearly recognizable characters and nicely detailed backgrounds. And, although there's not a lot of real "animation," the few bits of it included are fairly good, one of my favorites being when you have Scrooge smack an immovable object with his cane and he "vibrates" with the shock.

All in all, *Duck Tales* has more than enough depth for most serious players, and at the same time isn't so difficult to get into that it would hinder more casual players.

Ms. Pac-Man
Atari for the Lynx

Here's another good game that's hindered by inadequate controls. This is a game that should be played with a joystick, plain and simple. No amount of programming effort can overcome the fact that navigating mazes at high speed is not easily done with a joypad. Just a little pressure in the wrong place and *Ms. Pac-Man* will take an unexpected turn for the worse. Also, one of the "standard" *Pac*-strategies, wiggling the joystick rapidly back and forth to keep your



The Lynx is turning into a mini arcade, with such games as *Ms. Pac-Man* (shown above), *Xenophobe* and *Road Blasters*.

Pac-pal stationary, while attempting to lure the ghost monsters toward him/her, is virtually impossible with a joypad.

However, if you think you can adjust to joypad control for a maze game, this is a good one. The idea in *Ms. Pac-Man* is to eat all of the dots in each maze in order to progress to the next level, using special power pellets to make her ghost-monster opponents momentarily vulnerable to her bite. This conversion is true to the arcade original in just about every respect, but goes it one better by offering new challenges for the seasoned player. In the standard game, there are four different mazes to complete, each staying on the screen for two to four rounds before cycling on to the next one. In the new options the player gets "stretched" mazes that are considerably wider (and thus larger) than the standard mazes, and instead of four there are *21* different mazes to complete, with a new maze being presented on each level (until you reach the 22nd level, where it cycles back to the first). To help you survive these "macro mazes," a special "lightning bolt" bonus object occasionally appears under the ghosts' starting pen. Gobbling up this lightning bolt gives *Ms. Pac-Man* the option of going to lightning-fast speed for 15 seconds, letting her outrun the ghosts.

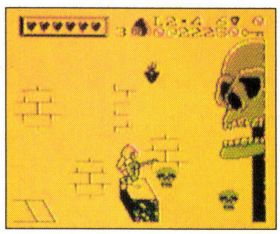
The graphics and sound effects are a bit below-par for a Lynx title, but not unexpected considering how small the characters must be in order to fit in the mazes. The only "missing" graphic element I noticed was that the ghost monsters' eyes don't "look" in the direction they are traveling. In the arcade game you can tell in which direction a ghost will turn when approaching a corner because its eyes will shift in that direction just before they reach the corner. That little "help" is missing here, but everything else is there, from ghosts Inky, Blinky, Pinky and Sue, to the "halftime" animations. The new and expanded mazes and the lightning-bolt bonus add a new twist to the *Ms.*, but whether or not you'll want to buy this game will depend on if you can live with the control limitations and whether you're interested in playing an old "classic" like this.

Xenophobe
Atari for the Lynx

"Hey," I hear you cry, "you reviewed this game *last* issue!" True enough, but not weeks after I turned that review in I was informed that the game had been revised, with the early levels made easier and more levels added. You must now complete 23 levels in order to reach the Xeno mother creature instead of the nine in the previous prototype I reviewed. This addresses one of the few complaints I had with the game: that it was too easy to get to the end. No more problems there, and 'nuff said on this game

Wizards and Warriors X: The Fortress of Fear
Acclaim for the Game Boy

This game, although the first of this series for the Game Boy, is actually a follow-up to a series of *Wizards & Warriors* titles preceding it. In the game, you are Kuros, one of the bravest warriors ever to wield the Iron Sword. Your old enemy, the wizard Malkil, is up to his old tricks again and is suspected of kidnapping Princess Elaine (again, as I said last issue, the woman is always the "object" in these games). In order to put down Malkil's threat, you have to penetrate the Fortress of Fear and seek out Malkil before he is ready to unleash his evil plans on the world.



Acclaim's *Wizards and Warriors X: The Fortress of Fear* is the third installment of Kuros' battles against evil.

This game features five "chapters," each composed of several levels. There are a total of 18 levels to master, with your primary objective being survival. You must avoid missiles, fight off attacking creatures and collect magic spells and gems.

There's nothing really *wrong* with this game, but at the same time one can't help but feel that it could be *better.* The graphics do not tax the Game Boy's abilities and are particularly weak in light of more visually attractive Game Boy titles like *Castlevania—The Adventure* and *Gargoyle's Quest*, which use shading for more "realistic" images that outstrip the simple line-drawing look of *The Fortress of Fear.* Likewise, the sound effects are nothing to get excited about either. In fact, there's very little "pulse-pounding" *anything* in this game. The enemies are lackluster, and even flying arrows don't seem to have any zip. It's like the world is in slow motion, a laid-back sort of adventure. Too laid-back for me, I'm afraid. Count me out.

Atari's *Xenophobe* has been altered since last month's review to include more levels.

Next time out we'll take brief ganders at a bunch of newer Game Boy titles, including *Mercenary Force, Ghostbusters II, The Bugs Bunny Crazy Castle* and the delayed-until-next-issue look at *Gargoyle's Quest.*

That's it for now. Gotta go! So many games, so little time!

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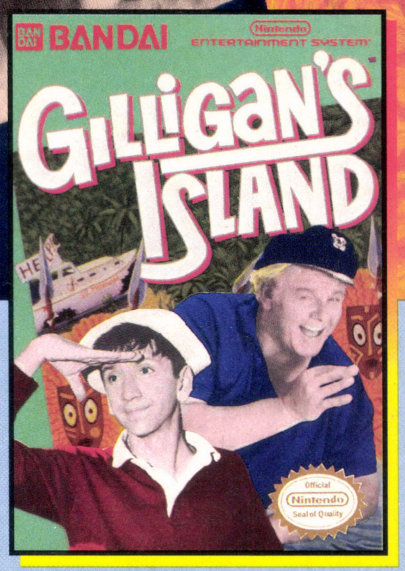
THE ADVENTURES OF GILLIGAN'S ISLAND™



"OK LITTLE BUDDY, you just stay right behind your old pal the Skipper and everything's gonna be just fine. All we have to do is follow these clues and find the magic stone tablet and we can get off this forsaken island once and for all. So Gilligan, ***please*** try not to mess things up just this one time. Stay away from the quicksand and don't go wandering off into any dark caves. Can you promise me that, little buddy? Little buddy? Now where has he gone to? ***Gilligan get out of that tree and stop messing around!!*** OK, just walk right in my footsteps and don't cause anymore trouble or we could be stuck doing re-runs forever! OK, little buddy? Gilligan? ***Gilligan!!!***"

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CIRCLE #168 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

Race Drivin'

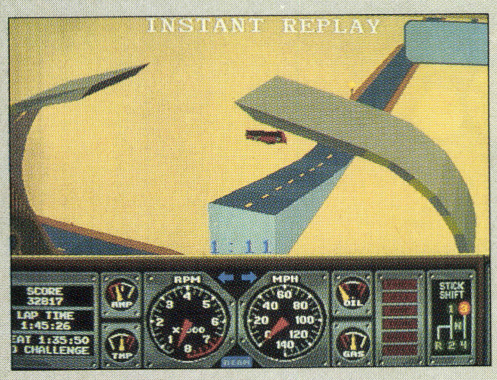
ATARI

BY
DONN NAUERT & ANDY EDDY

Gamers beware! This follow up to *Hard Drivin'* is not a driving simulator for the weak at heart! Oh, it looks tame enough from the outside, but once you get behind the wheel, get ready for the ride of your life.

Race Drivin' not only includes the original tracks of *Hard Drivin'*, but it also features two new tracks and a "Buddy Race" as well as a variety of cars to choose from. The Autocross track is designed to help players perfect their driving skills by providing a vector-drawn pace car and a lap timer. The pace car is actually a recorded replay of the player's best previous lap.

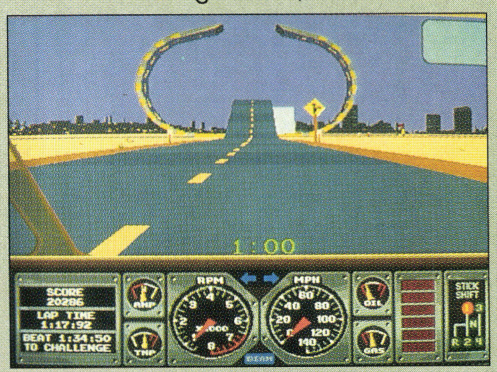
With no other cars on the course, the track will challenge the players with 90-degree turns that will have to be negotiated under a certain time limit in order to continue play. Once you feel comfortable with the way the steering reacts, it's time to select the ultimate track, the Super Stunt track. This is an incredible combination of hairpin curves, high-banked turns, a super jump loop and more.



Atari's *Race Drivin'* takes what 1989's *Hard Drivin'* started and goes further, adding a corkscrew, a jump loop and even a traffic accident to the stunt run, as well as a two-player/two-machine, head-to-head race that lets two human competitors battle it out on the wide-open track.

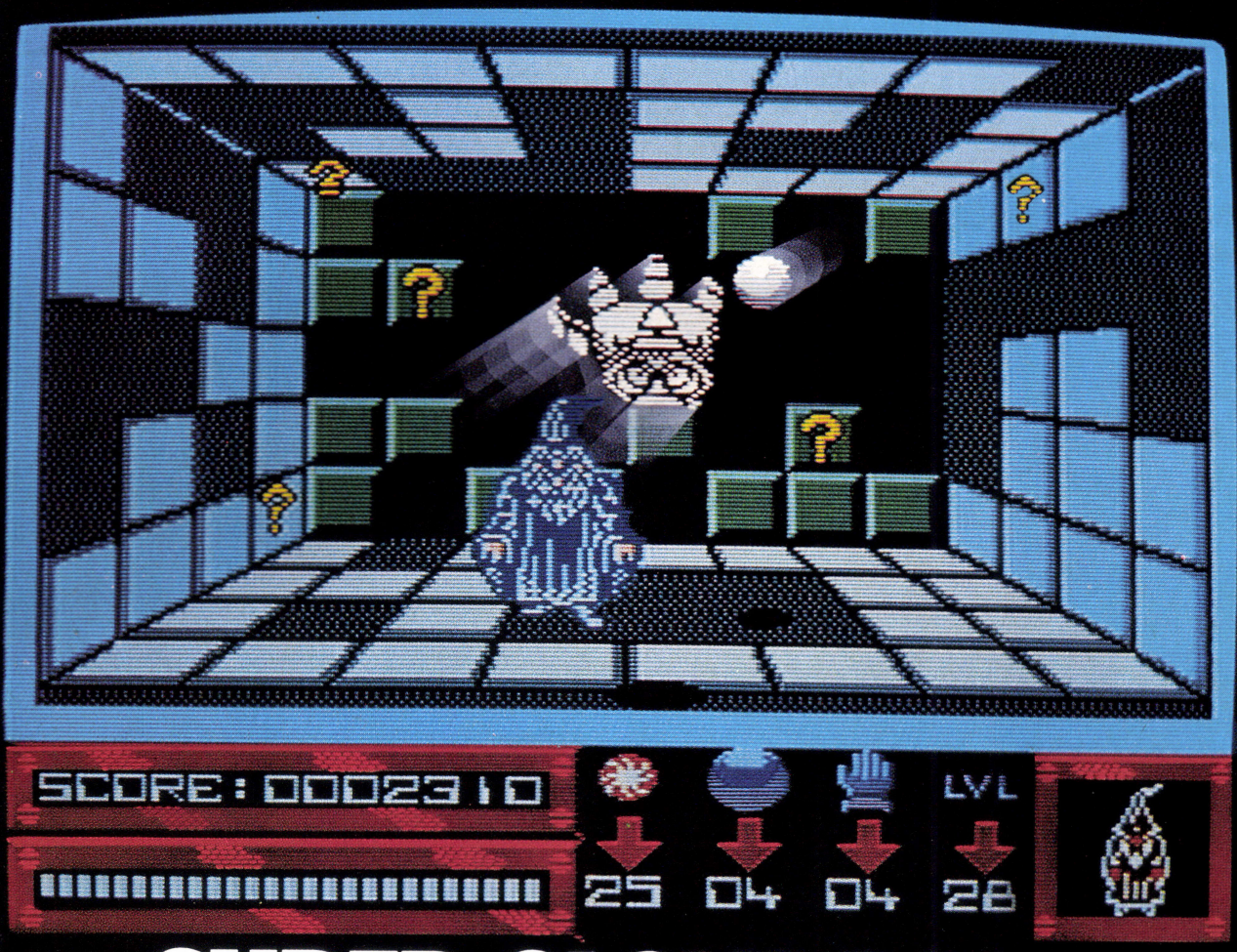
When you begin play, you start at the base of a high mountain. As you enter these dangerous roads, be aware of the posted speed limits—if you're not careful and you drive off the edge, you'll find out just how high you really are. The winding mountain road is followed by a jump that has not one landing but two. The lower landing is for those of you who chicken out at the last minute and hit the ramp at about 90 m.p.h. The upper landing is for those of you who are trying to push it to the limit. (You must hit the ramp going at least 110 m.p.h. if you want to make it.) If you're going too slow, on either landing, you'll get the chance to see what it's like to collide head on with a concrete wall. As you land, be prepared to slow down to about 60-80 m.p.h. because there's a turn, and if you're going any faster than that on the tail end of the turn, you'll go flying into the grass.

Immediately following the turn is your first checkpoint. A sharp turn that has to be taken at 60-80 m.p.h. is in front of a broken loop or jump loop. The best way past this is to hit the loop at 90-plus m.p.h., positioned as close to the edge as possible in the right lane, then hold the steering wheel as straight as you can. If you hit it wrong or let the steering wheel slip on you, you'll become a part of racing history. Not a pretty sight, especially when you look at it on the instant replay the game provides after a crash.



Provided you get through this alive, you'll be staring down the jewel of the game: the corkscrew loop. You have to hit this fantastic

VG&CE would like to thank C.A. Robinson and Company and Betson Pacific, both of Los Angeles, for their assistance in providing vital information for this column.



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One thing's for sure. Once you play Super Glove Ball, everything else will seem…flat.

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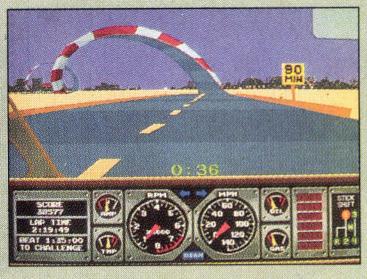
masterpiece at a speed of at least 90 m.p.h., and it's best to enter the loop on the right side of the road. There is no room for error on this thin stretch of road. If you do happen to fly off, the instant replay will take about ten minutes to watch.

Just when you thought you saw the end coming near, out of nowhere appears a monster of a hill. In the middle of this monstrosity, the road is actually perpendicular to the ground. It's so steep that after coming to a standstill near the top, you can floor it to try to make it over the top and find yourself going backward—while your wheels are doing 140 m.p.h. Going down the other side is no piece of cake either. If you do it wrong, you'll start to lose control of the car and begin a nose dive for the ground.



The final obstacle you must avoid isn't a loop, a jump or even a hairpin curve, but a car wreck. Yep, that's right—a car wreck. It seems that a truck and a car decided to lock bumpers in the middle of the road. To add insult to injury, You're in the middle of a tunnel and you must do your best *S.T.U.N. Runner* imitation in order to get up high enough to make it past the collision for your last dash to the finish line.

Race Drivin' lets you choose from three events—standard racing, the Super Stunt track and Autocross—and three car types, all of which let you tailor the experience to your liking, turning a single coin-op machine into a variety of car-racing games.

The Buddy Race is a first in video gaming. I can't think of any other video game that allows a second player (alternating) to go head-to-head with an image or playback of what the first player did. This allows two players to enjoy the spirit of competition against another player without the operator having to buy two separate machines. Which brings us to the other "Buddy Race." Using two machines, arcade owners can hook up two players by using the same type of cable that is used to hook up players on *Final Lap*. This helps to bring in a whole new thrill to the game.

In the one-machine/two-player game, the first player's car is a shadow or vector car just like in the championship race in *Hard Drivin'*. But in the two-machine/two-player mode, the car will be solid like in *Final Lap*. This means you can push your opponent off the road and do other similarly nasty things.

(Unfortunately, Atari didn't have the machine-linking feature available at the time of this writing, but it assured us this enhancement should be ready by the time you read this.)

To make it around all the different tracks, you've been given a choice of driving vehicles to select from. There's a Sportster, a Roadster and a Speedster, which all have manual transmissions. The Sportster is the only one that you can also configure as an automatic. You'll have to experiment to see which car suits you on the various tracks.

Even with all the intense driving in the game, there were a few things that bothered me about the game. The first thing was the wreck sequence. There seemed to be too much of a delay between when you went flying off the road—you know that you're obviously heading for a crash—and when you had a chance to start your engine again. The second annoyance was with the steering. Although there was an attempt to improve the handling to create a true simulated-driving experience, Atari went too far with tweaking the system. The end result is an over-sensitive steering reaction that makes it very hard to stay on the road in situations that you'd normally be able to get out of if you were in a *real* car.

Just the same, who cares! We're nitpicking to find flaws. The bottom line is that Atari's *Race Drivin'* is an incredible game that even non-driving game fans (like myself) will enjoy.

Dr. Dude and His Excellent Ray

BALLY/MIDWAY

"Feeling a little sub-dude? *Then let me show you how I got hip in the totally amazing story of* Dr. Dude and His Excellent Ray."

Pinball is getting more and more elaborate, a quantum leap above the now-ancient tables of old. Most of the same elements, such as flippers, bumpers and drop targets, are still used, but many enhancements have been made. Now you'll find pinball tables with digitized speech, synchronized light shows and eye-catching graphics on the LED-based scoring displays. Where pinball used to be a game of 100% mechanical and electrical devices, now computer brains run the show—and we mean *show*!

A good example of how high-tech has crept into pinball design is Bally/Midway's *Dr. Dude and His Excellent Ray*. This cutting-edge table offers the standard banks of drop targets, bumpers and holes to shoot the ball into, but it's also loaded up with all the up-to-date innovations

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that Bally/Midway and Williams have sprung on the arcades recently with such tables as *Whirlwind*, *RollerGames* and *Earthshaker*.

When you first step up to the flippers, you'll be amazed at all that *Dr. Dude*'s designers have packed onto the table, and the cartoony layout, splashed with lots of color and images, will have you looking long before you even drop a coin into the slot.

It's the game's many and varied targets that will attract the avid pinballer though. For instance, a section called the Magnetic Personality requires you to fling a ball at a target, which in turn activates a magnet (similar to the one used in *RollerGames*) that holds the ball for a few seconds.

Other effects include the extensive use of digitized speech. One hysterical chatter is the one you get when you land the ball in the Gift-O-Gab hole. When you score this target, a stream of pick-up lines flies out, rapidly picking up speed until it's just a mouse squeak. In a similar fashion, the line of scoring LEDs not only inform you of your point total but also what target you should hit next in conjunction with verbal prompts.

"*With the* Molecular Mixmaster *online, I began to program in the excellent ingredients of ultimate hipness: a* Heart of Rock 'n' Roll, *a* Magnetic Personality *and the* Gift-O-Gab! *I set the* Mixmaster *on* 'Puree' *and went for a*...SPIN!!"

By far, the wildest target in *Dr. Dude* is the Molecular Mixmaster, which is reached by running the ball up the Molecular Million ramp. Once you have completed the three "ingredients" that bring the Mixmaster to life, putting it into the Mixmaster will treat the ball to a few laps around the block, so to speak. If you hit the targets inside the Mixmaster enough, the game will urge you to get the Excellent Ray, which is captured by entering a hole on the upper-left of the table. This activates multiball play—as if one ball wasn't enough—and ups your scoring opportunities and bonuses as well.

Scoring is what this machine was built for. For example, if you can put the ball back into the Mixmaster during multiball play when the Dude-O-Meter is set at Super Dude, you'll be able to get a "gazillion," which is defined as "a lot of points." A spokesman for Bally/Midway said that he had received as much as 26 million points for a gazillion bonus!

The playfield in *Dr. Dude and His Excellent Ray* is filled with loads of point-filled targets, wild effects and colorful artwork that makes the pinball game fun to play and look at. The Molecular Mixmaster, a centrifugal chamber that's fed by a carefully placed ramp shot, can give the player millions, even *gazillions*, of points if it's entered at the right time.

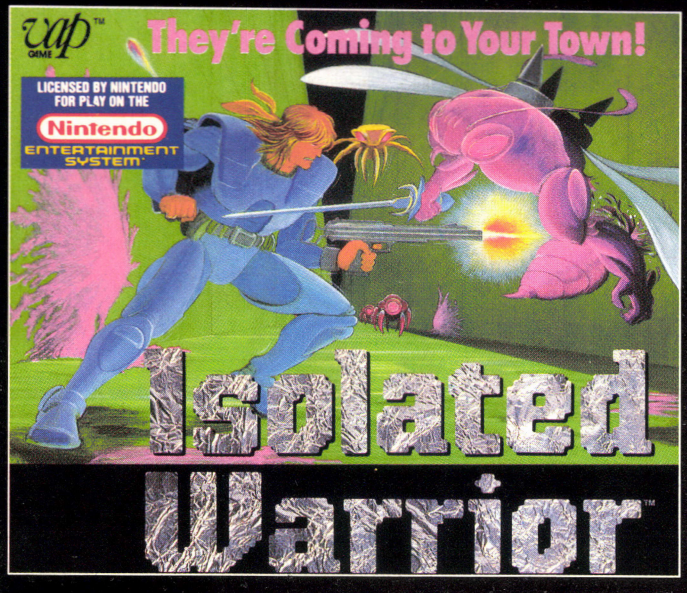
Mostly, what you'll find is a game that is packed with humorous features and bits of comedy. One incidental target, the Big Shot, is topped with a little tough-guy figure. Hitting the target—though this "bully" taunts you through the whole game—brings forth an "ouch" and causes the figure to jiggle simultaneously. Just reading the back-glass comic, which details the storyline that surrounds the game, is a kick.

Bally/Midway has outdone itself in furthering pinball design. To a pinball fanatic, the multilevel layout—the game features lots of ramps and chutes that take the ball to other sections of the table, as well as metal-framed tunnels that carry the ball over the playfield toward the flippers—is state-of-the-art, pushing the player to highly precise shots in order to activate certain scoring opportunities. But this isn't a game for just pinball wizards, as a virtual novice can plunk in a few coins, follow the instructions of the machine and still score a few million. *Dr. Dude* is a pinball table for everyone, offering targets and lights on almost every square inch of its surface. Where does it go from here?

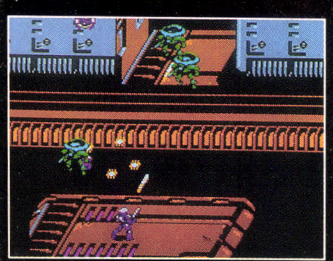
PREPARE YOURSELF

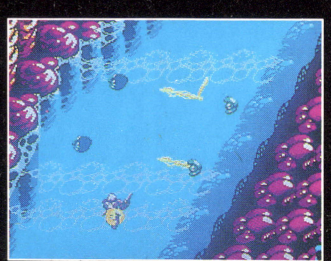
FOR THE INVASION...

2 HOT NEW GAMES ON THE WAY FROM NTVIC

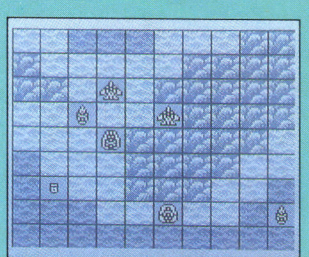


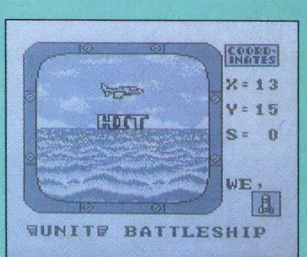
Isolated Warrior is a high-speed, uniquely developed game based on a 3-D concept that features over 40 types of enemy creatures, realistic graphics and explosive sound effects! Become Max Maverick, alone warrior, who must defeat the awesome creatures that attack his highly civilized planet!

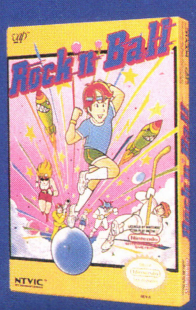




Power Mission simulates a realistic sea battle against a powerful enemy force. Select and deploy one of seven fleets and then destroy the enemy using radar, missiles and various weapons. Power Mission has 10 stages and the enemy gets stronger and stronger. Prepare yourself for this challenging, strategic, Game Boy game!







Rock 'n' Ball Currently Available

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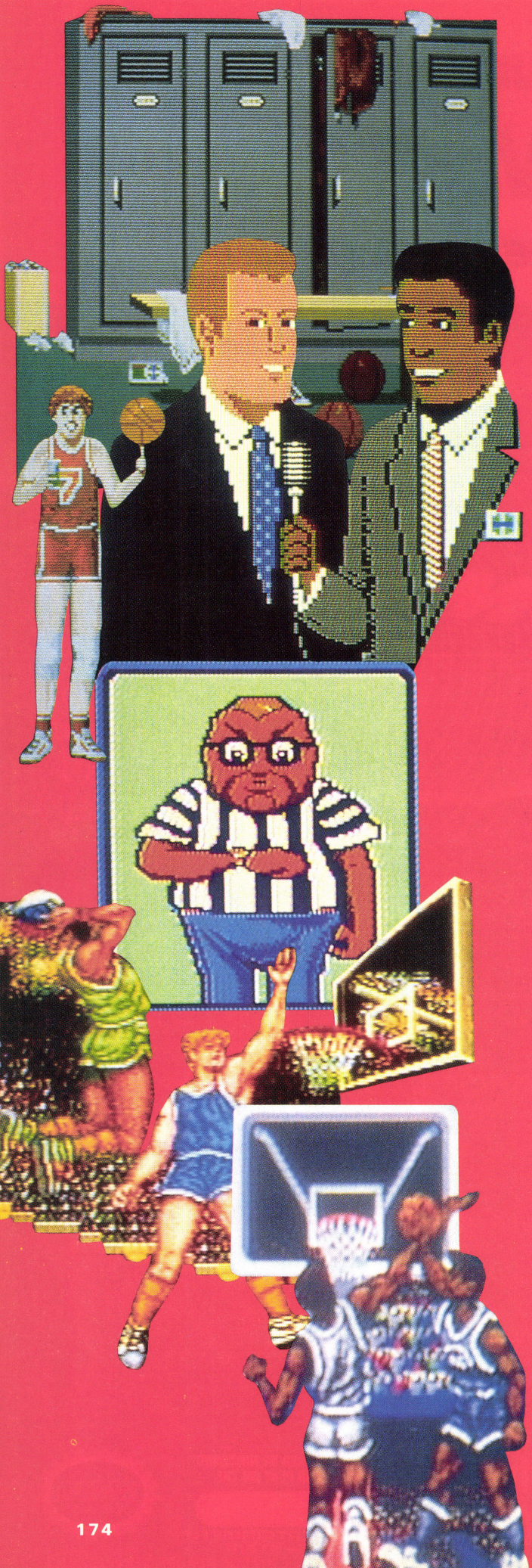
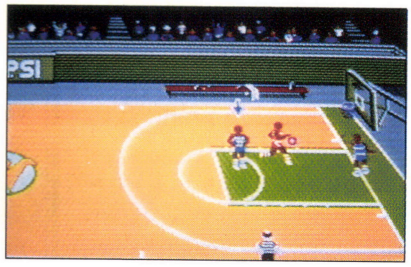


SLAM DUNK!

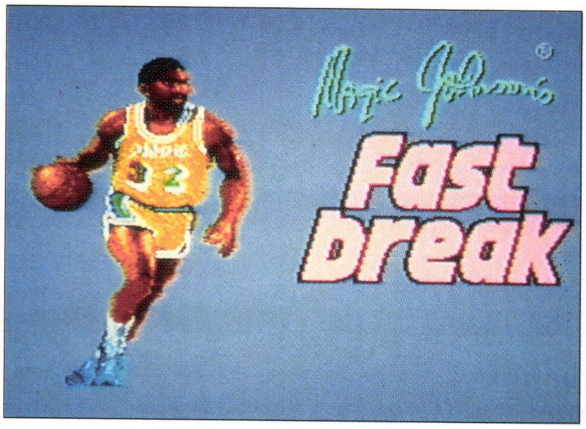
ELECTRONIC Basketball ROUNDUP

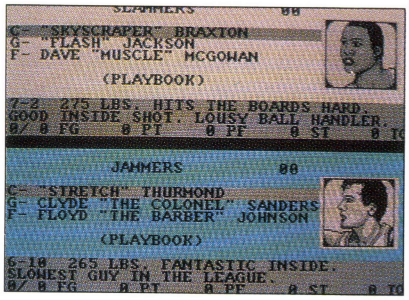
BY BILL KUNKEL

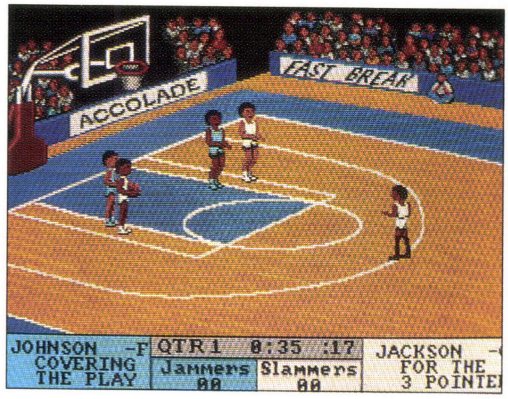
In 1989, basketball exploded over the computer software scene. Electronic Arts, Cinemaware, Virgin Mastertronic and SportTime (Brøderbund) all released major new round-ball simulations. So far 1990 has seen the addition of only one new computer b-ball game—Season Ticket/Data East's *Dream Team: 3 on 3 Challenge*. In contrast, the video-game world has experienced a basketball boom similar to last year's computer bandwagon. An incredible eight new video-game titles have been announced so far this calendar year, not to mention a new hand-held and two Game Boy cartridges!



Also coming to computers, however, is Konami's *Double Dribble*, a classic arcade-style b-ball contest originally on the NES. *Double Dribble* was a trendsetter in the video-game field with its selection of jump, set, foul and even three-point shots. Konami hopes this easy-to-play simulation will do just as well in the computer world. Versions of *Double Dribble* will be available on both the C64-128 and Amiga computers.







Above: Don't confuse Tradewest's *Magic Johnson's Fast Break* (top pair) with Accolade's *Fast Break* (lower pair).

Below (from left to right): Konami's *Double Dribble*, NEC's *Takin' It to the Hoop* and Gamestar's *GBA Basketball (Two-on-Two)*.

The Lone Dribbler

While last year's computer basketball games had to struggle for elbow room, Season Ticket's *Dream Team: 3 on 3 Challenge* (Data East) is this year's lone original entrant into the round-ball sweepstakes, so far. This VGA simulation for IBM PC machines features Patrick Ewing, Dominique Wilkins and James Worthy as an all-time super squad the user can play either with or against in a rousing game of three-on-three.

Designed by Scott Orr's Season Ticket, the game is largely an update of Scott's Gamestar classic, *Two-on-Two*, with the addition of an icon-driven command system similar to the one used in *Monday Night Football*, also by Season Ticket.

Dream Team is designed to interface with Data East's new modem-based hookup with the *USA Today* Sports Center. This telecommunications setup allows users to tap into the latest b-ball news and stats and even permits those stats to be worked into the game play.

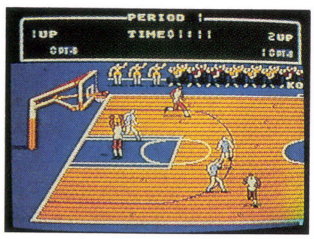
Dream Team faces a tougher challenge than its stars ever dreamt of. It must now face off in the marketplace against a crowd that includes *Fast Break* (Accolade), *TV Sports Basketball* (CinemaWare), *Lakers vs. Celtics* (Electronic Arts), *Magic Johnson Basketball* (Virgin Mastertronic), *NBA* (Avalon-Hill), *Pure-Stat College Basketball* (SSG), *Final Four* (Lance Haffner Software) and *Omni-Play Basketball* (SportTime-Brøderbund).

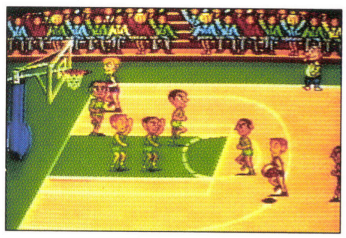
Video Games Go Hoop Happy

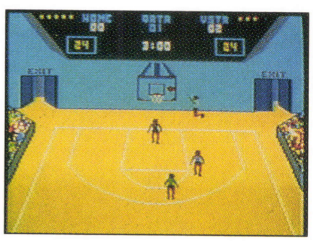
Anyone who thinks the computer round-ball market is crowded would faint after a look at this year's video-game shelves. In addition to such well-established titles as Konami's *Double Dribble*, Jaleco's *Hoops* and Vic Tokai's *All-Pro Basketball*, five new NES carts will show up.

Magic Johnson's Fast Break, from Tradewest, allows players to compete with an on-screen simulacrum of Earvin "Magic" Johnson in an angled, side perspective, two-on-two round-ball game. There are five levels of play skill and, as the gamer advances through each, his salary increases proportionally. The game can be played by anywhere from one to four players, and statistics are displayed on screen at the conclusion of every quarter.

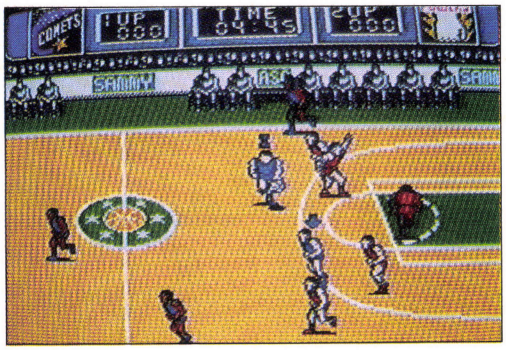
Players who'd rather control an NBA All-Star than play against him can check out *Jordan vs. Bird: One-on-One* (Milton Bradley), an NES version of the Electronic Arts computer game of the same title. *Jordan vs. Bird* is actually three games in one. In addition to the one-on-one game in which the two superstars go head-to-head in half-court competition, there is also Jordan's Slam Dunk Contest and Bird's three-point Shoot Out. The games use a vertically oriented, angled top-down perspective.





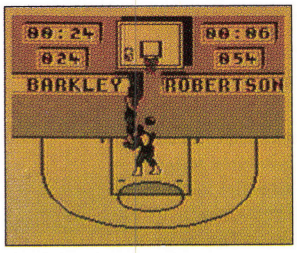


Fans of the Clown Princes of Basketball, the Harlem Globetrotters, can bring the teams incredible round-ball antics to the NES with GameTek's *Harlem Globetrotters Basketball*. This full-court, five-on-five contest can be played by up to four people, and fear not, it includes all the wacky passes and trick shots that made the Globetrotters famous. The 'Trotters can spin the ball around the arms of opponents,



pass behind their backs and even perform their famous bounce shot (where they slam the ball into the hardwood, ricocheting it into the basket. That's just during warm-ups!) *Harlem Globetrotters Basketball* is also equipped with GameTek's exclusive speech technology, so you'll hear the on-court sound effects, voices and music that's all part of the Globetrotter experience.

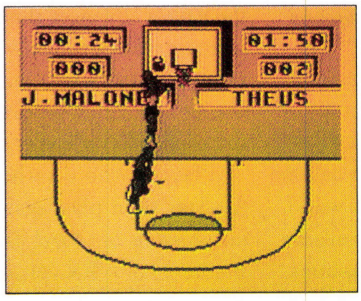
The ambitiously titled *Ultimate Basketball* from American Sammy for the NES is also a full-court, five-on-five simulation rendered in angled, side perspective with numerous special camera angles, which kick in when play moves near the basket. The fictional players are rated in terms of speed, strength and defensive ability, with height and weight also listed.

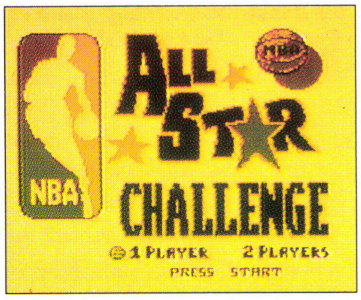


Top: American Sammy's *Ultimate Basketball* (left) and SportTime's *Omni-Play Basketball* (right).

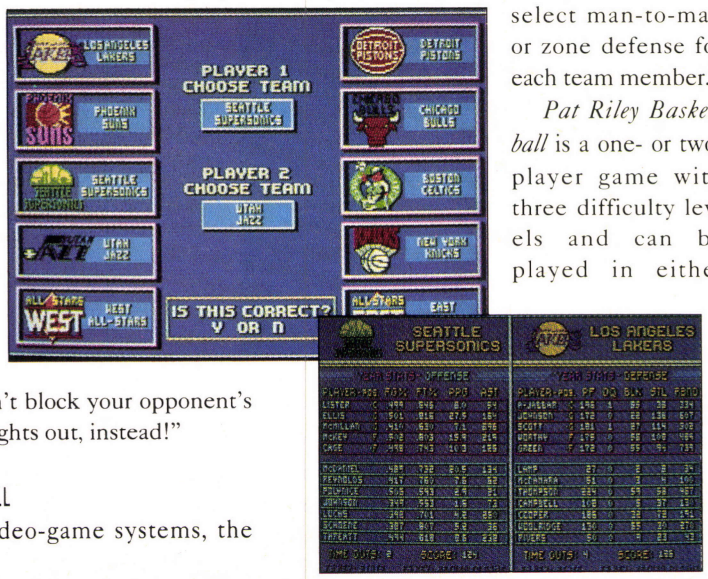
Middle: LJN's *NBA All-Star Challenge* (for Game Boy).

Bottom: Electronic Arts' *Lakers vs. Celtics.*





The final new NES entry is Acclaim's home version of the coin-op hit *Arch Rivals*, perhaps the most violent version of round-ball ever produced. This one- or two-player contest puts special emphasis on the fist fights that occasionally break out in the course of play. As the Acclaim catalog puts it: "This outrageous basketbrawl is slam-dunkin', full-court action with a twist—if you can't block your opponent's shot—punch his lights out, instead!"



16-Bit Basketball

The senior video-game systems, the Sega's Genesis and NEC's Turbo-Grafx-16, will also be represented by hot new basketball software. The Genesis has *Pat Riley Basketball* (Sega), an angled side-view round-ball simulation with additional, situation-driven, on-court camera angles, including a behind-the-head perspective on three-point shots and an up-close view on all slam dunk attempts.

In addition to controlling the player of your choice on the hardwood, several coaching options are also available, including player assignments and the ability to select man-to-man or zone defense for each team member.

Pat Riley Basketball is a one- or two-player game with three difficulty levels and can be played in either

A Basketball Gameography

Like all attempts to produce all-inclusive listings, this one is doomed to imperfection before we even get started. Nonetheless, we have called upon all the resources at our disposal to make this the most complete listing possible. We welcome all additions and corrections.

The video and computer games are listed in order of their publication, to the best of our research ability.

VIDEO GAMES

Basketball (Atari for 2600)—Very sophisticated early round-ball simulation from the fertile mind of Alan Miller. Full-court (non-scrolling) one-on-one action. Historically significant as the first sports video game to use the trapezoidal, angled side-view of the court, producing a now-familiar pseudo-three dimensional effect.

Basketball (Magnavox for Odyssey2)—Part of a two-games-in-one package, with *Bowling*. Extremely primitive non-angled side view one-on-one contest.

NBA Basketball (Mattel for Intellivision)—Three-man teams playing at any of three speeds easily made this the most sophisticated b-ball game of its era. This two-player-only simulation employed an offbeat passing system: using the control disk to direct a pass to a given zone, at which point the teammate nearest that zone would receive it if possible. First video game with the NBA license, but there are no real players or stats.

Great Basketball (Sega for SMS)—Scrolling, angled side-view with three-man teams. Users get to choose their team's country. Includes foul shots, dribbling, passing and shooting. Nothing special.

Double Dribble (Konami for NES)—The game that brought round-ball to the NES did it in style. Scrolling, angled side perspective with a 24-second clock, three-point shots, foul shots and jump balls. The first home game to use on-the-court close-ups for plays near the basket. A classic.

Hoops (Jaleco for NES)—Superb action-strategy playground-style b-ball simulation. Each of the playground superstars (Mr. Doc, Jammer, Wiz, etc.) has specific strengths and weaknesses. Playable one-on-one or two-on-two to ten, 15, 20 or 25 points. One- or two-player. The game uses a vertically oriented, angled top-down perspective with situation-based on-the-court close-ups. Superb game.

All Pro Basketball (Vic Tokai for NES)—Its emphasis on strategy separates this game from the rest of the NES pack. Players can set lineups based on player height, and use other player characteristics to select replacements and perform coaching functions.

Magic Johnson's Fast Break (Tradewest for NES)—Scrolling, angled side-perspec-

continued on page 178

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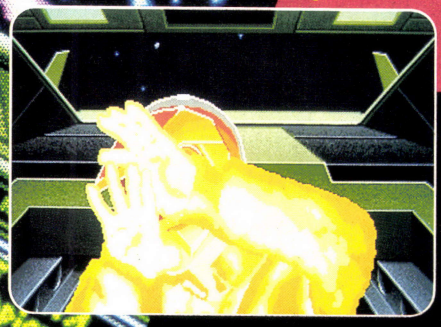

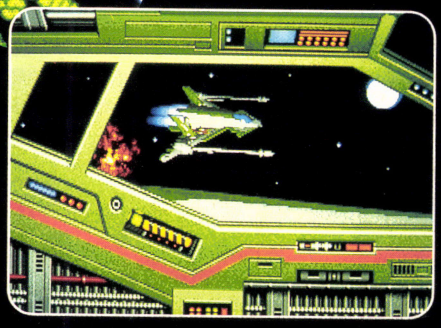

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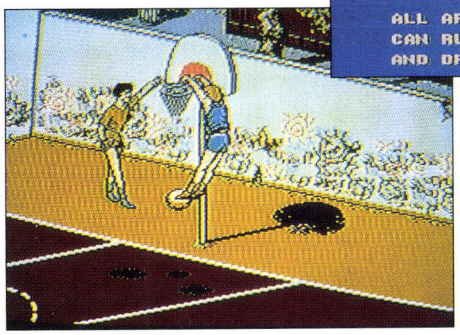
exhibition (single game) or tournament mode. The game includes eight five-player (non-NBA) teams.

Electronic Arts' superb



Lakers vs. Celtics computer simulation is also on its way to the Genesis. This angled side-view re-creation offers some of the most superb basketball graphics ever seen.

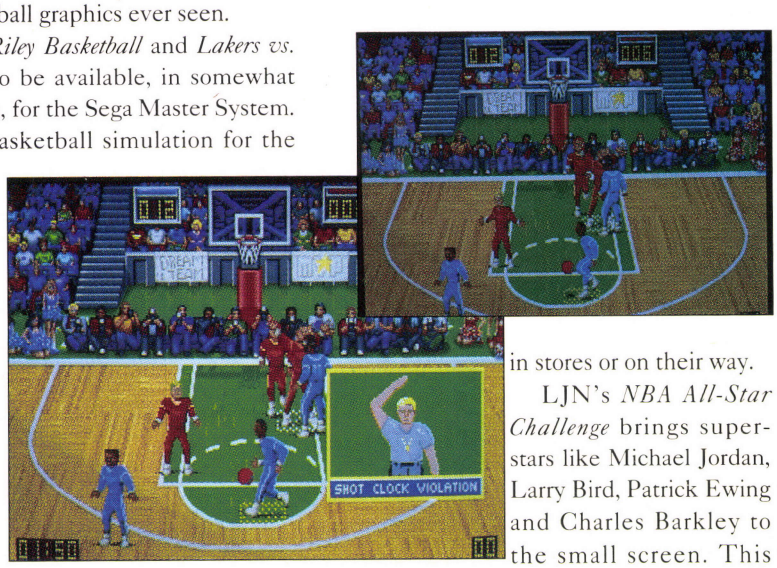
Both *Pat Riley Basketball* and *Lakers vs. Celtics* will also be available, in somewhat modified form, for the Sega Master System.

The big basketball simulation for the TurboGrafx-16 looks to be *Takin' It to the Hoop* (NEC), a one- or two-player (with TurboTap) angled full-court side-view contest with a special magnified man-to-man perspective available on command. *Takin' It to the Hoop* offers tournament, league and exhibition (single game) options and allows the gamer to modify the starting lineup, change any of the five players' positions and even boasts a selection of offensive and defensive formations. The eight available (non-NBA) teams each have specific strengths and weaknesses. For example, Los Angeles is a well-balanced team while Dallas has team power but is poorly balanced, and Boston has good passing skills but is slow on defense.

Game controls allow the on-court player to shoot, pass, pivot, dribble and steal. Players are rated for power, speed, shooting ability, passing skills and defense. Available defensive formations include man-to-man, zone and a combination of both called zone plus man-to-man.

A Court in the Palm of Your Hand

The success of the Game Boy made the appearance of a basketball title for that hand-held programmable system inevitable. In fact, no fewer than three Game Boy b-ball contests are already either in stores or on their way.



LJN's *NBA All-Star Challenge* brings superstars like Michael Jordan, Larry Bird, Patrick Ewing and Charles Barkley to the small screen. This program includes several mini-games, including Around the World (in which players must sink baskets from a variety of court positions), Foul Shot and One-on-

Top: Jaleco's *Hoops*.
Middle: Data East's *Dream Team: 3-on-3 Challenge*.
Bottom: Bally/Midway's *Arch Rivals* coin-op.

continued from page 176

tive round-ball game for one to four players. Notable mostly for its nice graphics, use of salary (as the players progress through five levels of play, the paycheck grows) and for the deal Tradewest made, which causes users to be subjected to a gigantic Pepsi ad through the entire game.

Pat Riley Basketball (Sega for SMS)—Angled side-view, full-court, five-on-five simulation with several coaching options.

Pat Riley Basketball (Sega for Genesis)—The first b-ball game for the Genesis employs a scrolling, angled side-perspective and several coaching options, including defensive assignments (zone or man-to-man) for each player. Uses several situational on-court close-ups.

Jordan vs. Bird: One-on-One (Milton Bradley for NES)—Three games in one, all based on the early '80s Electronic Arts computer classic, *Dr. J and Larry Bird Go One-on-One*. Includes slam-dunk competition, a three-point shootout and standard one-on-one. Employs a vertically oriented angled top-down perspective.

Ultimate Basketball (American Sammy for NES)—Scrolling, angled side-view round-ball simulation with several on-court, situation-based close-ups. Players are rated for speed, strength and defense.

Arch Rivals (Acclaim for NES)—Madcap basketbrawl simulation puts emphasis on the fights that can, and generally do, break out between players. Based on the coin-op of the same name.

Harlem Globetrotters (GameTek for NES)—Basketball, Globetrotter-style. Fancy passes and trick shots are integrated into an otherwise conventional simulation.

Lakers vs. Celtics (Electronic Arts for SMS)—Great graphics spark this scrolling, angled side-view action-strategy game.

Lakers vs. Celtics (Electronic Arts for Genesis)—Gorgeous graphics grace this translation of the EA computer hit.

Takin' It to the Hoop (NEC for TurboGrafx-16)—Sophisticated action-strategy basketball simulation. Scrolling, full-court action with five-man teams rendered in an angled side-perspective. Numerous strategic options and extensive player ratings make this a very strong entry.

COMPUTER GAMES

Basketball (Atari for Atari 400/800)—Al Miller's ground-breaking two-on-two b-ball simulation playable by one to four gamers. First computer sports game to employ angled side-perspective.

Julius Erving and Larry Bird Go One-on-One (Electronic Arts for multiple systems)—Ground-breaking one- or two-player simulation using a vertically oriented, angled top-down perspective as simulacrum of Bird and Dr. J go head- to-head.

GBA Basketball (Two-on-Two) (Game-

continued on page 180

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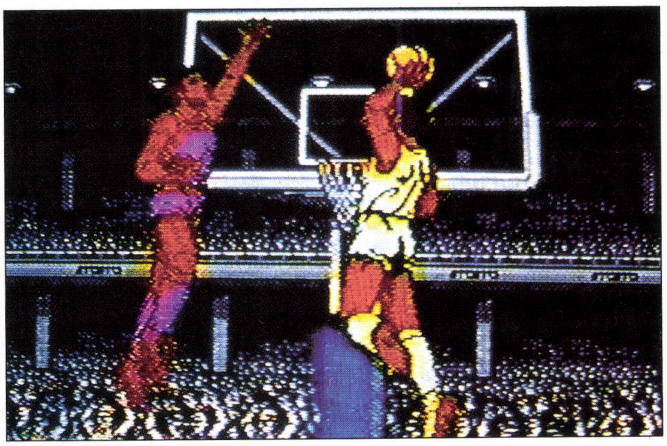


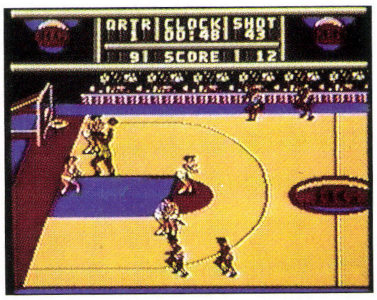
Top: American Sammy's *Ultimate Basketball.*

Middle: GameTek's *Harlem Globetrotters.*

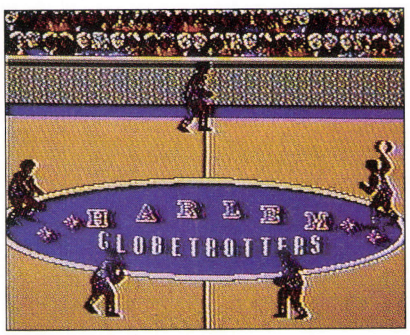
Bottom: Cinemaware's *TV Sports: Basketball.*

One. *NBA All-Star Challenge* can be played either in solitaire mode or against another Game Boy owner, via the Video Link.

Milton Bradley will bring its NES version of Electronic Arts' *Jordan vs. Bird: One-on-One* to the Game Boy, with a three-in-one approach somewhat similar to the LJN game. *Jordan vs. Bird* pits the two superstars against one another in one-on-one, slam dunking and three-point shooting competitions.



Finally, Jaleco, the creators of the groundbreaking NES game, *Hoops*, will bring their electronic round-ball wizardry to the Game Boy with the pugnaciously titled *In Your Face*. This half-court, one-on-one or two-on-two competition features impressive graphics, including special on-the-court perspectives for breakaway slam dunks. The schoolyard backgrounds and distinctively rendered players give *In Your Face* a unique and pleasing look.

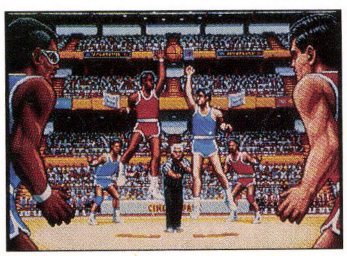


Wrapping Up

The other new entry to this year's basketball sweepstakes is Acclaim's dedicated (read: non-programmable) hand-held version of *Arch Rivals*, the Bally/Midway arcade game that Acclaim has also brought to the NES. This hand-held version of the popular coin-op features a non-scrolling, angled side-perspective of the action as players guide five-man teams up and down court in this madcap, brawling rendition of the normally more genteel sport of basketball.

B-ball, round-ball, basketball. By whatever designation, it remains one of electronic gaming's most durable genres. We are now in the second year of the new basketball revolution and have already seen more than two dozen major releases across coin-op, video, hand-held and computer gaming systems, with more expected (including a version of *TV Sports Basketball* for the TurboGrafx-16).

So lace up those sneakers, wash out your gym shorts and start up your favorite hoop simulation, 'cause it's a basketball-loving world!



continued from page 178

star for multiple systems)—The next step in the development of computer basketball gave players two-man teams. *GBA* was the first b-ball simulation to use a vertically oriented, angled top-down perspective on a full-court game.

Fast Break (Accolade for multiple systems)—The next evolution of basketball on computer, *Fast Break* employed three-man squads in a scrolling, full-court simulation rendered in angled side-perspective.

Final Four (Lance Haffner for multiple systems)—Text-only stat-replay game allows users to coach real college teams in an NCAA tournament.

NBA (Avalon Hill for multiple systems)—Statistical replay contest with animated plays. The first basketball stat-replay game with graphics. Several additional disks allow users to create teams, make trades, keep stats and play with newer teams.

Pure-Stat College Basketball (Software Simulations for multiple systems)—College version of *NBA* by the same developers.

Jordan vs. Bird: One-on-One (Electronic Arts for multiple systems)—Update of the original *One-on-One*, this version includes a "Slam Dunk" and "Three-Point Shot" contests.

Magic Johnson's Basketball (Mastertronic for multiple systems)—Arcade-style basketball game with the emphasis on action rather than strategic input. Scrolling, angled side-perspective graphics are outstanding in the Amiga "Mega Game" version.

OmniPlay Basketball (SportTime for multiple systems)—Ambitious attempt to create a macro-simulation through the use of several optional but interfacing modules. These cellular modules include league play; pro, college and fantasy leagues; a side-view version of the game (which otherwise employs a vertically oriented, angled top-down perspective); and a print utility.

Lakers vs. Celtics (Electronic Arts for multiple systems)—The first computer b-ball game to use real NBA teams and players. *Lakers vs. Celtics* is an action-strategy game rendered in angled side-perspective. Each player comes with complete ratings that include ball handling and shooting abilities, as well as speed and height.

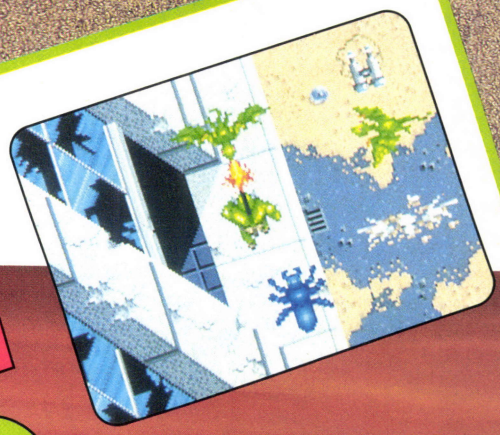
TV Sports: Basketball (Cinemaware for multiple systems)—Hot graphics highlight this action-strategy hit that can be played at almost any level, from pure arcade action to coaching strategy. This is one of the few full-team simulations to use a vertically oriented, angled top-down perspective.

Dream Team: 3-on-3 Challenge (Data East for IBM)—VGA basketball contest starring Patrick Ewing, Dominique Wilkins and James Worthy.

Double Dribble (Konami for multiple systems)—Computer version of the NES cartridge classic.

—B. K.

BAD BLOOD



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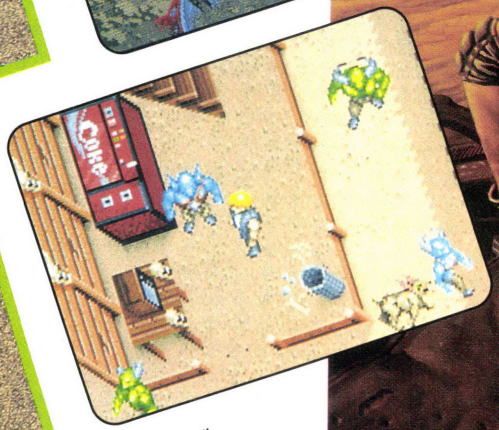

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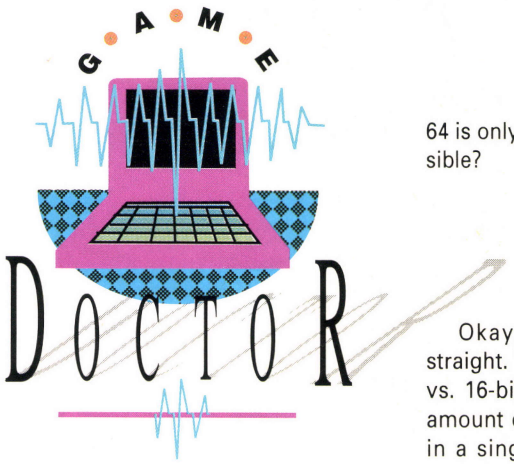

Life's Problems Solved!

by the Game Doctor

Hello again, game fans. It's time for your monthly sit-down with the Software Surgeon. Take a seat in the waiting room—there are plenty of copies of VG&CE on the coffee table—and the Game Nurse will get to you as soon as possible.

We've got one heck of a crowd today, so I'd better see my first patient right away.

question

I have heard that Commodore is thinking of closing down its line of 64s, 128s and Amigas because they are planning a new line of computers. I think this is merely gossip. But, just to be on the safe side, is it?

—Bobby Shively
Lancaster, California

answer

CBM is indeed planning a new line of computers. However, since those new computers, called CDTVs, are basically Amigas with a CD drive, it seems unlikely that the standard Amiga will be discontinued any time soon. As for the 64/128 series, the Doc hasn't heard about Commodore cutting the cord, but let's face it, these systems are near the end of their lives as viable home computers, certainly from a gaming perspective.

By the way, Bobby, I loved your envelope artwork! I tell ya, one of the neat things about this job is seeing the creativity and intelligence of my readers. In fact, don't feel bad if your question doesn't get answered; *Game Doctor* mail is at an all-time high. Approximately 80% of the questions I receive are good enough to be printed, but there's just no way I can publish them all! But I do read everything and I sure appreciate it!

question

I have a Sega Genesis. Some software dealers now have Mega Drive cartridges (Japanese version of the Genesis). They say they fit in the Sega Genesis with some modification to the game port.

When I was on holidays I visited a video store that had several titles for the Mega Drive. The salesman told me that they would fit with some modifications. I told him I had [already] modified [my Genesis]. He asked me if the [Mega Drive] cartridges got hot. Apparently some of the Genesis systems (depending on when they were made) had to be modified by changing some diodes (at least I think he said diodes).

I was planning on buying a couple more Mega Game cartridges, but now I am uncertain. My Mega Drive cartridge does not heat up, but I don't want to harm my Genesis.

—Jim McLaren
Whitefish, Ontario, Canada

answer

Mega Game cartridge casings are slightly wider than the game slot on the Genesis, so users routinely either file down the sides of that slot or simply remove the entire top piece of the Genesis in order to play hot Mega Game software (like Sunsoft's incredible *Batman*).

As for Mega Game software getting hot, we have should have complete information on this subject by next issue. Let me say, however, that the Doc has been playing Mega Game software on his Genesis for several months now with no obvious ill effects. It may be that only certain models are prone to this ailment. Stay tuned for the facts!

question

I was reading through your August '90 issue and came upon something that really puzzled me. In the article "Genesis and TurboGrafx-16 Take on the 16-bit Computers" it stated that the Commodore Amiga had 320x200 resolution. I was going through a computer review magazine, and it said the C-64c had a maximum resolution of 320x200. Well, I own a C-64c, and the graphics nowhere compare to the Amiga. If the C-64 is only an 8-bit [machine], how is this possible?

—Eric Crowley
Reno, Nevada

answer

Okay, let's get some technical stuff straight. The machine's "bit" number—8-bit vs. 16-bit, for example—refers only to the amount of information its CPU can process in a single "byte." A 16-bit machine can therefore process twice as much data as an 8-bit in the same amount of time. This is not necessarily related to screen resolution.

Resolution is only one factor in determining the quality of a system's visual presentation. Far more important are the number of colors the system can display. The Amiga's palette of 4,096, with 32 colors available per screen, is responsible for its graphic superiority over the C-64.

question

I would be grateful if you would send me everything you can about any kind of game system and any tips and tactics or anything you have you can send me.

—Tony Duke
Milton, Florida

answer

Sorry, Tony, I'd love to be able to help the many readers who request information, etc., every month, but it just isn't possible. The Doc doesn't have the facilities to answer mail or provide information on an individual basis. Just think of VG&CE as the answer to your request, okay? And I loved the holographic stamp!

question

I own a Sears Video Arcade II, and I can play Atari 2600 games on it. I noticed there are four joystick ports on it. What are the extra three for? I have been to several video-game and toy stores trying to find games that are made just for it but can't. Is this system any more powerful than the original Video Arcade or the 2600?

P.S. Is the Atari 7800 an 8-bit system?

—Allan Cantrell
Phoenix City, Alabama

answer

Once upon a time, Allan, long, long ago, it was thought that multiple joystick ports

continued on page 188

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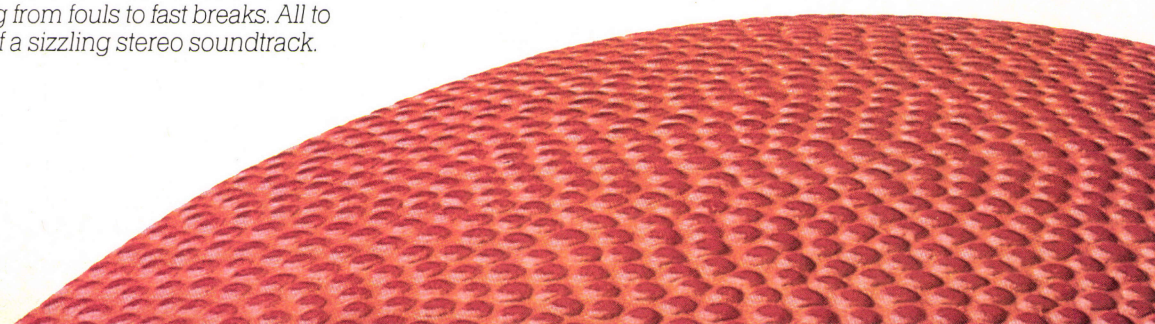
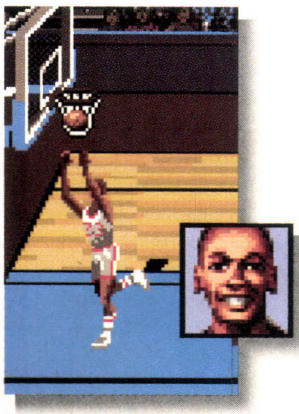
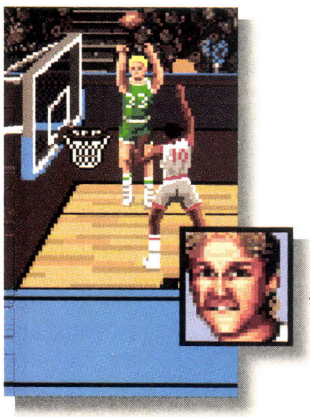
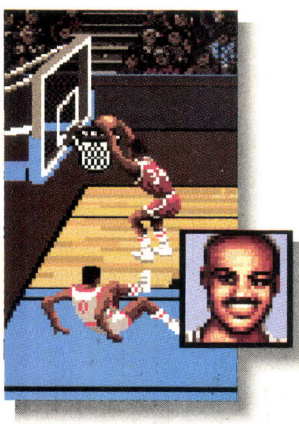




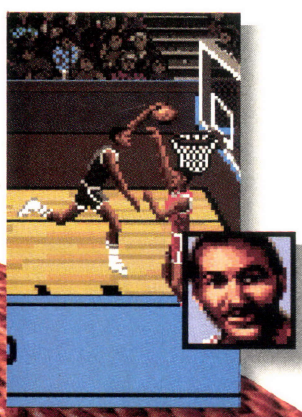
Jordan's Air Show. *Find out what life's like above the rim.*



Bird in Flight. *Nothing but net.*



Barkley's Gorilla Dunk. *Charles is a real animal.*



Clyde's Glide. *Wham, bam a tomahawk jam.*

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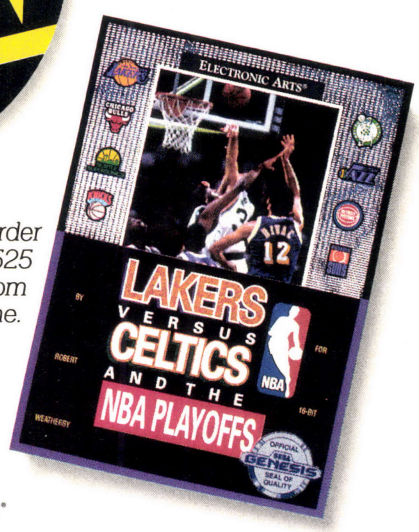

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CIRCLE #176 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

continued from page 184

were a good idea. Call me reactionary, but I always agreed. Believe it or not, the first Atari computers, the 400 and 800, also offered four joystick ports and several games (including *Basketball*) to take advantage of the luxury. For whatever reason, the number of available joystick ports has consistently shrunk over the past dozen years to the point where the Genesis comes packed with only one joystick and the TurboGrafx-16 requires a peripheral for multiuser play!

The Atari 7800 is an 8-bit machine.

With Commodore concentrating more on the CDTV, it would seem that you would look at what Atari is doing with its ST (I own a 1040ST). Well, it appears you haven't, so I will update you.

They are currently working on a 520 and 1040 STe, which was released in England about six months ago. The STe will boast an improved color palette with 4,096 colors and advanced hardware scrolling enabling super-smooth scrolling in any direction and superb split-screen effects.

It can phase-lock its video output to an external video source, permitting direct linking to a genlocking device. It will have 8-bit PCM (pulse code modulation, which allows it to replay sampled sound without burdening the CPU) stereo sound. It will have SIMM sockets, which allow easy memory upgrades, so you don't have to disassemble your ST to upgrade it.

It will have a blitter chip enabling it to shift high amounts of data at high speeds without burdening the CPU, a new 1.6 TOS (the operating system) that even allows MS-DOS-compatible disk formatting. And lastly, with adapters, up to six people will be able to use the STe at one time (normal STs allow only four people to play at once).

I think Atari realizes that if it wants to compete seriously with Amiga in the U.S. (Atari already controls more than 60% of the computer market in England and the rest of Europe), then it had better get moving. I also think software companies have finally realized that Atari is no longer a meager company manufacturing 2600s. I have noticed many software stores around my neighborhood making deals with European software houses in order to get the most recent software. For example, in the September '90 issue you asked whether *Dragon's Lair* was released yet. Well, I had bought it a month earlier, through a software store who got it from England a month earlier.

I've heard a Sega portable has already been released in Japan. Is this true?

Now to CDs. I have heard that there are already about 100 games finished and in the waiting room for Amiga's CDTV. Is that true, and, if so, will Amiga try to push the size of the games or the graphics and sound quality or both?

I read in your September issue that Sierra On-Line is working on CD [versions] of *King's Quest V* and *Mixed-Up Mother Goose* for the IBM. Will the CD versions of these games be available in other formats (preferably ST) and, if so, how much will a CD player of that type cost? Could I buy an NEC TurboGrafx-16 CD player now for future use on my ST, or do I have to wait for a special one specifically for my computer?

—Tal Funke-Bilu
Cambria, California

Great letter, Tal, with lots of good information and intelligent questions. As for your comments on the ST, however, the brute fact is that the ST has no credibility in this country and is actually losing market share to the Amiga even in Europe. I love the machine and wish Atari the best of luck, but there are some serious problems (primarily, getting the darned things fixed), which I can't see Atari overcoming. The fact is, ST versions of games frequently sell in the hundreds of copies. Hundreds! If your local software merchants are seeking out European ST product, that's probably because there are enough ST users in your area to support it, but believe me, this is a regional phenomenon.

A Sega portable has been released in Japan but, unlike the TurboGrafx-16 portable, this is a new system, not a hand-held version of the SMS as was earlier reported.

Are there 100 games ready for release on the CDTV? Well, unless Commodore is counting all available CD products anywhere in the world, I would be astonished if the number were anywhere close to that. There are products under development, but not nearly the number that were in the works six months ago, since Commodore cancelled so many of its game projects. The nice thing about the CD format, however, is that it is easily translated from one CD-based system to another, so developers will tend to support all CD systems—IBM, Mac, NEC and whoever else joins the bandwagon.

An NEC CD drive will not be compatible with your ST, and I have heard nothing about any Atari plans to release a CD drive for the ST. CD drives will probably span a large price range, but my guess is that within two years they will sell in the $200-500 range. Right now, of course, they are somewhat more expensive.

By the way, Tal, you are the winner of this month's *Game Doctor* Prize Packet. A collection of game-related goodies are already speeding on their way. Enjoy!

Why does it seem like NES game prices keep getting higher and higher? I really like the games and all, but shelling out a whopping $60-70 a game is ridiculous. The [cheapest] games are around $25. Is there any hope for lower prices?

—Anthony Turner
Dayton, Ohio

One thing to keep in mind is that many new games cost more for the consumer because they cost the publisher more to build. More sophisticated chips, such as those used in state-of-the-art NES product, cost publishers so much that the increase is invariably reflected in the retail price.

Many industry observers, however, believe that this Christmas could signal a turning point in the NES marketplace. With more and more titles swamping the marketplace, inventories at an all-time high and the Super Famicom on the way, we could see a major drop in prices within a few months. Of course, such a price drop would also signal the collapse of the 8-bit video-game marketplace. If that happens, you might be able to purchase your favorite NES games for a much lower price at this time next year.

QUICKIES

To the various readers, including Lance Rice of Jaspar, Alabama, who wondered how the same game or even license (e.g., *Batman* and *Dick Tracy*) can appear on multiple systems, the answer is simple. If a publisher purchases exclusive video-game rights on a game or license, that's what they get. They may, however, simply purchase system rights.

Back in the early '80s, it was standard practice for popular games to appear in every possible video game, computer and hand-held format. Today, with the dominance of Nintendo and that company's penchant for exclusivity, that policy has faded somewhat. If Nintendo loses its grip on the video-game market, however, and there is no longer one dominant player, but rather several big ones, multiple licensing should make a long-overdue comeback.

And that about wraps things up for this installment of *Game Doctor*. Remember to send me all your comments, questions and corrections: *The Game Doctor*, 330 S. Decatur, Suite 152, Las Vegas, NV 89107.

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Q: IN POPULOUS,™ WHICH DISASTER *CAN'T* YOU UNLEASH:

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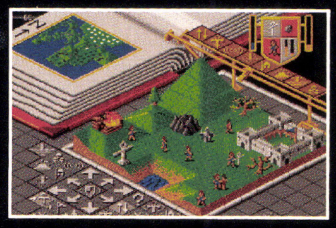
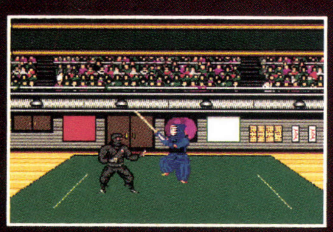
C. Whopping great cataclysmic floods
D. Oozing, pestilential swamps
E. World-wide acne epidemic



G.A.T. QUESTION #2

Q: BUDOKAN THE MARTIAL SPIRIT™ FEATURES KARATE, BO, NUNCHAKU, AND KENDO. EACH MARTIAL ART HAS OVER ___ UNIQUE MOVES:

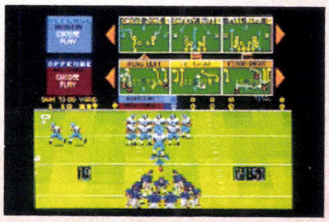
A. 10
B. $E = mc^2$
C. 16
D. π
E. 25



G.A.T. QUESTION #3

Q: IN JOHN MADDEN FOOTBALL,™ THE ONLY THING YOU *CAN'T* MAKE YOUR PLAYERS DO IS:

A. Call 100 different pro plays from John Madden's playbook
B. Hit hard, hit often, hit mean
C. Sell popcorn at the game
D. Dive, spin, jump, break tackles, and call audibles
E. Tough it out in the mud or snow to win Super Sunday



G.A.T. QUESTION #4

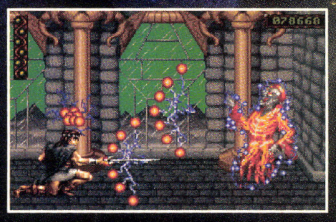
Q: IN LAKERS VS. CELTICS AND THE NBA® PLAYOFFS,™ YOU CAN MASTER:

A. Michael Jordan's awesome air reverse slam
B. Charles Barkley's monstrous gorilla dunk
C. Isiah Thomas' slashing drive and finger-roll
D. Clyde the Glide's ferocious tomahawk jam
E. All of the above

G.A.T. QUESTION #5

Q: THE ___ IS THE CENTRAL WEAPON IN SWORD OF SODAN™:

A. Enchanted sword
B. Killer parakeet
C. Industrial strength chainsaw
D. Small to medium-sized thermonuclear device
E. Rubber chicken



G.A.T. QUESTION #6

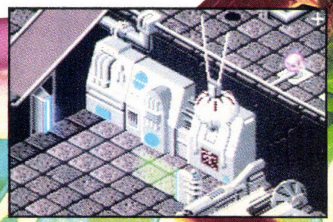
Q: BATTLE SQUADRON™ IS:

A. An underwater chess game requiring wit and a large lung capacity
B. Two Sopwith Camels and a Messerschmidt fighting a horde of locusts
C. A World War II simulation with genuine film footage
D. A rapid-fire space combat game with bodacious graphics
E. None of the above

G.A.T. QUESTION #7

Q: IN ZANY GOLF,™ PLAYERS OVERCOME OBSTACLES LIKE:

A. Land mines, hot dogs, and swamp shrews
B. Lasers, hamburgers, and moving holes
C. Gravity, relativity, and math anxiety
D. Terrorists, aliens, and dingo smugglers
E. Adolescence, socialization, and genetic inheritance



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_____ I would like to be a Genesis game advisor for Electronic Arts. Give me a call sometime.

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CIRCLE #177 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

THE 1990 GAMERS POLL

PART III

Female PLAYERS

State Their LIKES AND HATES

BY

ARNIE KATZ

AND THE VG&CE EDITORIAL STAFF

THAT BREAKING NOISE YOU HEAR IS THE SOUND OF SHATTERING MYTHS. WOMEN, THE HOBBY'S "SILENT MINORITY" ARE SPEAKING UP AT LAST, AND IT'S TIME TO REPLACE ILLUSIONS WITH SOLID FACT.

THE FEMALE VIDEO AND COMPUTER GAMER HAS REMAINED AN ENIGMA TO THE GAMING INDUSTRY SINCE THE FIRST *PONG* PADDLE KNOB WAS TWIDDLED TWO DECADES AGO. ELECTRONIC-GAMING MAGAZINES, SOFTWARE PUBLISHING EXECUTIVES AND AMATEUR ANALYSTS HAVE SPOKEN AND WRITTEN MUCH ABOUT THE LIKES AND DISLIKES OF FEMALE PLAYERS. THE GLITCH: NO ONE ASKED WOMEN FOR THEIR OPINIONS.

WE HAVE. AND THE RESPONSES TO VG&CE'S "1990 SURVEY OF ELECTRONIC GAMING" TURNED UP A LOT OF FASCINATING INFORMATION ABOUT WOMEN WHO PLAY ELECTRONIC GAMES. SOME OF THE RESULTS TURN "CONVENTIONAL WISDOM" TOPSY-TURVY. FORGET THE OUTMODED IMAGE OF FEMALE PLAYERS AS SEMI-INTERESTED POSEURS WHO HANG AROUND THE FRINGES OF THE ACTION AND CHEER THEIR HUSBANDS, SONS AND BOYFRIENDS TO VICTORY. PARTICIPANTS IN THE STUDY OWN MORE EQUIPMENT, SPEND MORE PER WEEK ON GAMING AND DEVOTE MORE HOURS TO ACTUAL PLAY THAN THEIR MALE COUNTERPARTS!

To make the results more meaningful, a pair of questions in the survey enabled us to separate the electronic gaming population into three sub-groups. We also asked respondents to rate their interest in computer, video and coin-op games on a 1-10 scale. Approximately 55% of women consider themselves video-game specialists, a slightly higher percentage than among men.

These players share the same interest profile as the entire video-game-specialist segment. They are highly interested in cartridges (9.7), moderately intrigued by coin-ops (6.9) and fairly casual about entertainment software (5.5).

Female video game specialists are old enough to be the big sisters, if not the mothers, of guys with similar interests. Most male video gamers (58%) are under 16 years of age, while the majority of female cartridge fans (75%) are 26 or older.

Exactly half of female video game specialists play more than ten hours a week, and three-quarters allot at least six hours. Two-thirds spent over $10 per week, though only 32% of the total sample has such a big budget. Computer-game specialists represent the smallest division in the hobby. Women are a little more likely (9.9%) to fall into this classification than men. The difference is only about 2%, which is hardly significant.

In general, computerists spend about a buck a week less than video-game fans. This pattern holds true for women too. Distaff gamers put in at least ten hours a week at the console. They love software (10.0), but evidence shows even less liking for video games (5.0) and coin-ops (4.5) than the total computer-specialist sample.

The remaining 36% of the female survey respondents fall into the megagamer category. These are the people who love all types of electronic gaming. No age group predominates among the megagamers, with an equal number falling into the 12-16, 17-25 and 26-40 age brackets. Female megagamers are, on the whole, a few years younger than the average computer- or video-game specialist.

A megagamer isn't as apt to be an arcade regular as a video-game specialist, but almost all of them occasionally visit the family amusement centers. They devote a little less time and a little more money to the hobby than the VG&CE reader average, though other women who like just one kind of electronic game actually do more playing and buying than the megagamers.

PLAYERS PICK FAVORITE MACHINES

Women are very committed to 8-bit video-game systems. They are more likely to own one than are males. An overwhelming majority of female survey participants, 85%, have a Nintendo NES, and nearly half, 45%, own a Sega Master System. These are much higher figures than for the total survey sample: 66% for NES, 33% for SMS.

More than nine out of ten female videogame specialists have an NES, and nearly six out of 10 possess an SMS. Again, both figures are much greater than for the corresponding group of males. Women are 8-bit loyalists, but they display more resistance to the powerful 16-bit consoles than the mass of the magazine's readers. At this time, 27% have bought a Genesis and 14% own a TurboGrafx-16. Software for Sega's top-of-the-line machine includes a lot of fast-action shoot-'em-ups, and the relative scarcity of strategy-oriented contests has evidently hurt initial acceptance.

Another factor leading to lower 16-bit hardware ownership is that female computerists have simply not investigated the world of 16-bit video gaming. You'll have to look mighty hard to find a female computer specialist who owns either a Genesis or TurboGrafx-16.

When it comes to computer gaming, the main difference between the sexes is that women are much more likely to play on an IBM PC system. This is another instance in which software has affected the choice of hardware. Male players gravitate toward the fast-action C-64 titles, but women choose the IBM PC, with its emphasis on adventures and electronic board games.

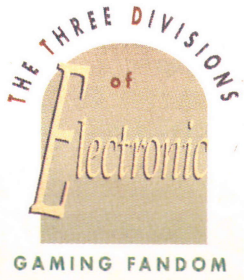
What They'll Buy

Women are cagier about future buying plans than male survey respondents. Most elected to skip this question, so it's hard to be definitive about how they'll spend their money this fall and winter.

A couple of general trends do emerge, however. About 16% of female gamers plan to buy a 16-bit machine, with Genesis the four-to-one choice over the TurboGrafx-16. On the computer side, IBM PC looks like it will remain the prime system for women, as more intend to buy an IBM or compatible than all other brands of home computers combined.

The Final Reckoning

Women don't like exactly the same hardware and software as men, but their love of gaming is no less sincere. They expend as much time and money as any player, and their tastes range just as widely. To build a complete audience for interactive electronic entertainment, hardware manufacturers and software publishers will have to abandon their preconceptions about female gamers and start dealing with reality.



Whether it's disks or cartridges, the verdict from women is the same: They like action, but only when it's wedded to challenging strategy. Although there was some support for fast-action combat games, the ones that gathered enough support to make the "favorites" list, like *Altered Beast*, require the player to do more than mindlessly punch and kick everything in sight. Computer adventures and strategy games are tops with female megagamers. The entire top five consists of two quests and three skill-oriented contests, and no arcade-style program accumulated more than a few scattered vote points.

THE FOLLOWING CHARTS SHOW SOME OF THE "FAVORITE GAME" TABULATIONS:

FEMALE MEGAGAMERS RATE
THE TOP VIDEO GAMES
(FIRST-PLACE VOTES IN PARENTHESES)

1. *Super Mario Bros. 2* (2)
2. *Legend of Zelda* (2)
3. *Altered Beast* (1)
4. *Dragon Warriors* (1)
5. *Super Mario Bros. III* (1)
6. *Phantasy Star II* (1)

FEMALE VIDEO GAMERS
PICK TOP CARTRIDGES
(FIRST-PLACE VOTES IN PARENTHESES)

1. *Phantasy Star* (2)
2. *Ultima* (2)
3. *Revenge of Shinobi* (1)
4. *Ninja Gaiden* (1)
5. *Battle of Olympus* (1)
6. *Blazing Lasers* (1)
7. *Double Dragon* (1)
8. *Ghouls 'n' Ghosts* (1)

FEMALE MEGAGAMERS PICK
TOP COMPUTER GAMES
(FIRST-PLACE VOTES IN PARENTHESES)

1. *King's Quest* (1)
2. *Archon* (1)
3. *Tangled Tales* (1)
4. *Tetris* (1)
5. *Wheel of Fortune* (1)

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OFFER EXPIRES FEBRUARY 27, 1991

INSIDE

GAMING

STORM WARNINGS FOR VIDEO GAMING

BY ARNIE KATZ

Writer, editor, lecturer and game designer Arnie Katz knows the field from every perspective. Each month his column takes readers inside the world of video and computer games. This time around, he analyzes some disturbing trends in the video-game field.

Call them storm warnings or call them danger signs. Whatever the catch phrase, one thing is certain: There are momentous events taking shape in the home video-game business.

Don't sell the electronics stock and don black arm bands yet, but there's a crisis brewing in video gaming that's likely to dramatically change the face of America's favorite entertainment addiction.

I'm not talking about something that's going to happen in 2001, folks. By the time this issue of VG&CE hits the newsstand, I believe you'll see some big stuff happening.

In June 1989, I examined the potential for a video-game crash. Then and now, I don't see much chance that video games will suddenly vanish from the pop culture scene the way they did in the country at the end of 1984. But history, they say, repeats itself. It seldom repeats itself exactly, because the conditions are always at least slightly different for every event.

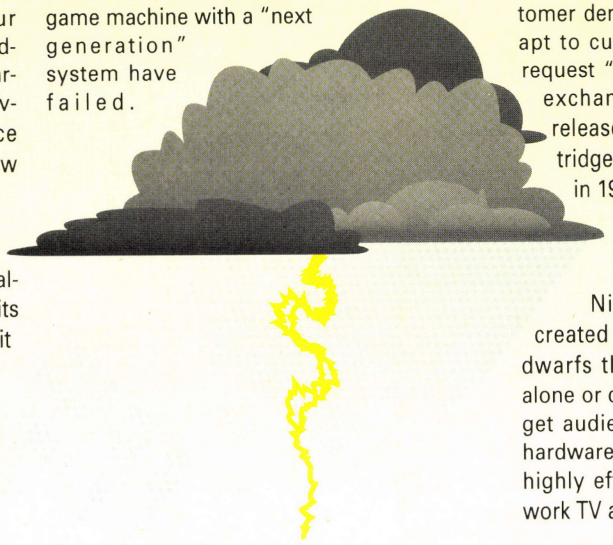
The steep decline in sales of video-gaming hardware and software in the second half of 1984 triggered a total bailout, because the hobby had no long-term roots. Retailers and distributors had no reason to think that cartridges would make a comeback.

Well, we've all seen the renaissance. Merchants probably will feel that if the business can revive once, it can do it again. That should keep video-game departments alive in electronics and discount stores even though the Nintendo-inspired boom is coming to an end after four years of stupendous growth.

The 16-bit invasion has received a tremendous amount of media exposure, as well it should. The improved sound and graphics, enhanced game play and increased program execution speed are worth all the headlines. It's great technology; a clear and significant improvement over the 8-bit generation of consoles. Technology is the basis of our hobby, but companies can't just toss a product out to a waiting world. It has to be marketed. Advertising, promotion, editorial coverage and word of mouth must convince consumers to spend money to bring new units home.

Aye, there's the rub. The Sega Genesis and NEC TurboGrafx-16 have had modest success so far, and Nintendo is still shilly-shallying about introducing the U.S. version of its Super Famicom. This year's sales of all 16-bit hardware and software are a fraction of what Nintendo is still doing on the 8-bit.

There's no guarantee that the Nintendo 16-bit will gain more acceptance than its two rivals already on the market. Previous attempts by video-game hardware manufacturers to build on the success of a popular game machine with a "next generation" system have failed.



Cases in point include the Atari 5200 and 7800, the Odyssey3 and the Intellivision II.

Historically, success in one video-game generation breeds failure in the next. I won't pretend to understand this phenomenon, but there are too many examples to deny it exists. Here's one possible explanation: Fans of a video-game system often display hostility toward a company that introduces a next-generation console that makes their favorite unit seem obsolete. This reaction is always more intense if the fan's newly downgraded machine is made by the same company. Perhaps the reason follow-up hardware doesn't make it is because the manufacturer can't induce enough of its existing customer base to overcome these bad feelings and buy the new system.

NEC had no reservoir of consumers to alienate, since the TurboGrafx-16 is its first product. The Sega Master System sold "only" a million units in the U.S., and Mike Katz's crew hopes to sell a lot more Genesis machines than that over the next three years.

Nintendo, on the other hand, has a huge customer base. If these people feel alienated and betrayed by the Super Famicom, what are the chances that it can convert a sizable percentage of them, and then find another 15 million or so new video-game buyers to equal its 8-bit success? It's about the same as lightning striking the same place twice.

Sales of NES systems have peaked, and software sales are soft. Units-per-copy are down sharply, and Nintendo is already reflecting this by sharply lowering allocations to its cartridge-duplication business. A year ago, everyone expected a solid title to sell at least 500,000 or even a million copies. Now titles are going out with initial reproduction runs of 50,000 carts or even less.

Inventories are growing in the face of an increased number of titles and declining customer demand. Retailers and distributors are apt to cut orders for new merchandise or request "stock balancing" (a fancy term for exchanging old, unsold goods for new releases). Can the dreaded discount cartridge market, which ruined the business in 1984, be far behind?

The Mass Market

Nintendo's overwhelming success created a mass market for cartridges that dwarfs the audience for electronic stand-alone or computer games. The size of the target audience makes it possible to promote hardware, software and accessories through highly effective mass media, including network TV and major magazine advertising.

Before the LAPC-1 Music Card

After the LAPC-1 Music Card

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If we were you, we sure as heck wouldn't run out and buy an LAPC-1 without knowing something about what it does. So if you give us a moment, we'll tell you.

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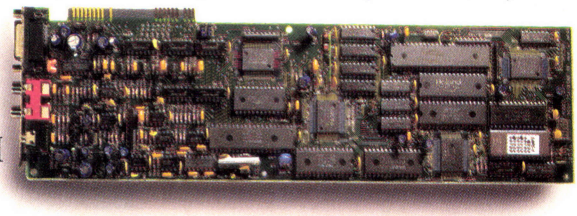

And since the LAPC-1 uses the same L/A Synthesis circuitry we put in our professional musical equipment, combined with the only true MIDI interface on the market, it also provides you with something else—access to all of the tools you need for creating incredibly realistic music as well.

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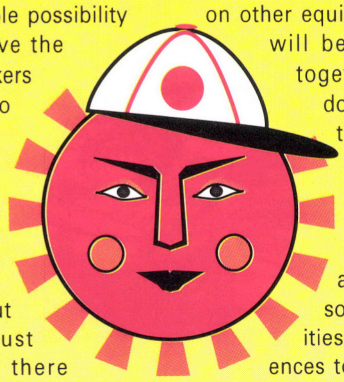
Here's one small example of the possibilities open to NES-oriented companies. Game shows often give NES carts as prizes, because there's a reasonable possibility that the recipient will have the hardware to play them. Makers of Amiga software can't do that because its market penetration is so light.



Makers of software for the Nintendo Entertainment System can take advantage of hard-hitting media to tell people about their new titles. That just wouldn't be practical if there wasn't a machine in approximately 30% of America's homes.

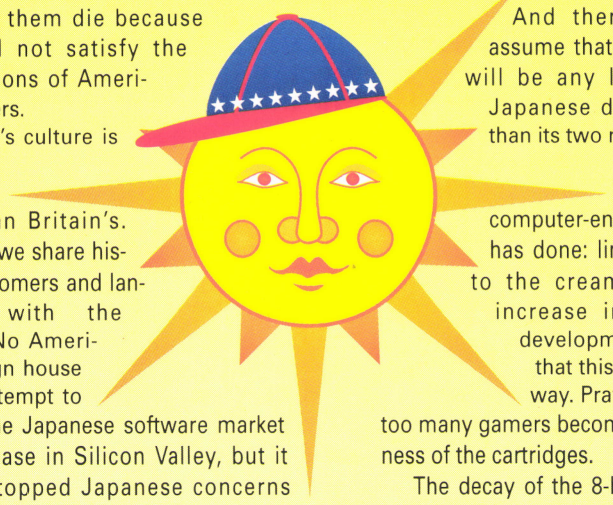
Heavy television and print advertising will back all three 16-bit consoles, at least until each flies or fails. After that, hardware ads will diminish as the suppliers see less potential for additional sales. A commercial on *Cosby* makes sense if the publisher anticipates selling $2 billion worth of consoles, but it might be reckless overspending if likely sales are 5% of that.

Nintendo used its 8-bit clout to reimpose a concept most people had considered outmoded: system exclusivity. Developers of games for the NES are prohibited from doing editions for other brands.

One big change that should start blossoming by next spring is a resurgence of cross-system publishing. Barry Friedman, who originated the concept with *Miner 2049er* nearly a decade ago, is again assembling interlocking publishing consortiums to blast hot games across all video- and computer-game systems.

As Nintendo's share of the total video-game universe shrinks, it will become harder to demand exclusivity on new software. Publishers will want to put each title on as many machines as possible, to achieve a total target market sufficiently large enough to make mass market advertising and promotion feasible. Limited exclusivity will become the rule. Various systems may have a good, new game for three to six months before it debuts on other equipment, but all of its versions will be advertised and marketed together. If this doesn't happen, don't expect to see a lot of cartridge commercials on MTV by this time next year.

Software quality is a growing concern. The "game design gap" between Japan and America is no illusion. The societies have numerous similarities, but there are enough differences to assure that no Japan-based development house has its finger on the U.S. gaming pulse. The analogy to the computer-game situation of 1989 is as obvious as it is threatening. American computer-entertainment-software companies dumped dozens of games conceived and developed in Europe on the stateside market and then watched them die because they did not satisfy the expectations of American gamers.



Japan's culture is more alien to ours than Britain's. After all, we share history, customers and language with the British. No American design house would attempt to invade the Japanese software market from a base in Silicon Valley, but it hasn't stopped Japanese concerns from trying the exact opposite.

Gamers in this country are coming to see Japanese video games as repetitive, unimaginative and formulaic. The whole "bosses and levels" shtick has been done to death.

Japanese designers are also not adept at creating new game genres and formats. The latest release from the Pacific Rim is most likely to be an upgrade of last year's hit, with enhanced graphics and sound. Doing the same thing, over and over, even doing it better each time, can only hold the interest of American gamers for so long. More and more people are already renting their games at the local video store instead of buying them, because each new game cloys a little faster than the previous one.

Japanese games also suffer from an imperfect grasp of U.S. popular culture and a less-than-fluent command of written English. The latter manifests itself in sometimes ludicrous documentation and faulty on-screen presentation of text.

To paraphrase a line by science-fiction writer Harlan Ellison, the third-party cartridge suppliers are kneeing the 16-bit systems in the groin. At the summer CES, too many games for the Genesis and TurboGrafx-16 were scarcely more advanced than the average NES title. And there's no reason to assume that the Super Famicom will be any less dependent on Japanese design/development than its two rivals.

The only solution is to do what the computer-entertainment business has done: limit overseas designs to the cream of the crop and increase investment in U.S. development. There are signs that this shift is already under way. Pray that it comes before too many gamers become jaded by the sameness of the cartridges.

The decay of the 8-bit market is happening today, but it doesn't have to signal the end of video gaming. Retailers, distributors and publishers must allow this hobby to have its ups and downs, like every other comparable pastime. They must also heed the warning signs and address today's real problems. It's their move.

GETTING INTO FANDOM
HELP FOR FANZINES: EDITORS AND READERS

Fandom needs two types of people: fanzine editors and fanzine readers. Part of VG&CE's effort to foster the development of the electronic-gaming hobby is to put folks who want to publish computer and video-gaming fanzines together with potential readers. Everything described in this section can be obtained from Arnie Katz: 330 S. Decatur, Suite 152, Las Vegas, NV 89107. Please send a self-addressed stamped envelope if you are requesting a list or reply.

Would you like to receive sample issues of current electronic-gaming fanzines? It's easy. Just send me your name and ask to be added to the "Fanzine Readers List." The list will be distributed to fanzine editors who want to add interested readers.

Fanzine publishers who want to receive the "Fanzine Readers List"—more than enough names to make a first issue mailing list—can request one from me at the same address. And when you publish those fanzines, don't forget to send them to me so I can tell VG&CE's readers about them.

Megagaming, the biweekly fan newsletter published by Bill Kunkel, Joyce Worley and me is available for $1. It contains Bill Kunkel's fanzine reviews, Joyce's Worley's fanzine editors' advice column and all the latest reviews and happenings of the gaming world.

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Future Classics Collection

LIVE STUDIOS

Versions: Amiga ($49.95), IBM PC ($39.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10

It's a wonder there aren't more products like Live Studios' *Future Classics Collection*, in these days of overpriced software and underdeveloped sales. This package includes five attractive genre contests: *Diskman* and *Diet Riot* are maze-chase games; *Blockalanche* is a variant on kinetic sorting puzzles like *Welltris* and *Blockout*; *Lost 'n' Maze* is a first-person labyrinth-clearing game and, finally, *Tankbattle* is an arcade-style armored-combat shoot-out.

Diskman and *Diet Riot* are the weakest of the quintet. The nearly identical graphics make the games seem indistinguishable, and neither one is much fun to play. The graphics are so tiny that it can be difficult to even find the player-characters, much less identify and align them with other game objects. Both games employ an angled top-down perspective, but *Diet Riot* has a couple of interesting features that elevates it above its more mundane cousin.

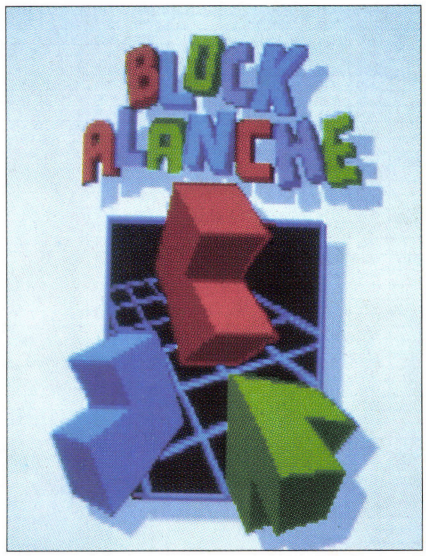
In *Diet Riot*, the player-character is waging a one-man crusade against junk food by gathering food crates from stores and tossing them in a dumpster. As the fast food is inadvertently consumed, the player's ECG-like heart monitor and a heart icon fluctuate to indicate increasing danger. The player can work off some of that lard by pumping iron, courtesy the bench press icons located throughout the maze. Beware, however, as strenuous exercise is also dangerous to the old ticker.

Blockalanche is a creative take on the idea of three-dimensional puzzle pieces falling into a cube-like container, à la California Dreams' *Blockout* and Spectrum-Holobyte's *Welltris*. In this version, however, rather than looking down on the falling blocks, the container is displayed from a two-thirds side perspective, creating a whole new type of challenge.

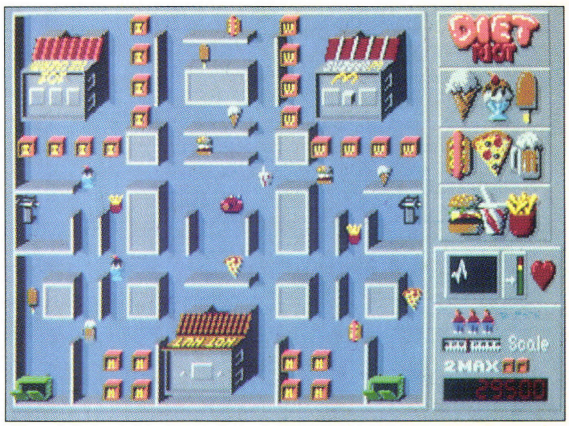
Lost 'n' Maze is a compelling maze-exploration game in which the player is furnished with both a first-person viewpoint and limited overhead mapping; the map shows where the treasures are hidden, but doesn't display the labyrinth walls. The graphics are excellent.

Tankbattle hearkens back to the old Intellivision game, *Armor Battle*, as well as countless *Pong*-type tank combat contests. The player must drive a tank around a variety of obstacles, do battle with enemy juggernauts and capture extra gas, as well as the enemy "flag" (in this case, a coat of arms). The top-down graphics are attractive, though small.

All in all, there may not be any actual future "classics" in the *Future Classics Collection*, but there is plenty of good gaming to be had; this is the best soft-



Live Studios' *Future Classics Collection* is an attractive bundle of games—a maze-chase, a three-dimensional geometric puzzler and an arcade-type shoot-'em-up—filled with good gaming.



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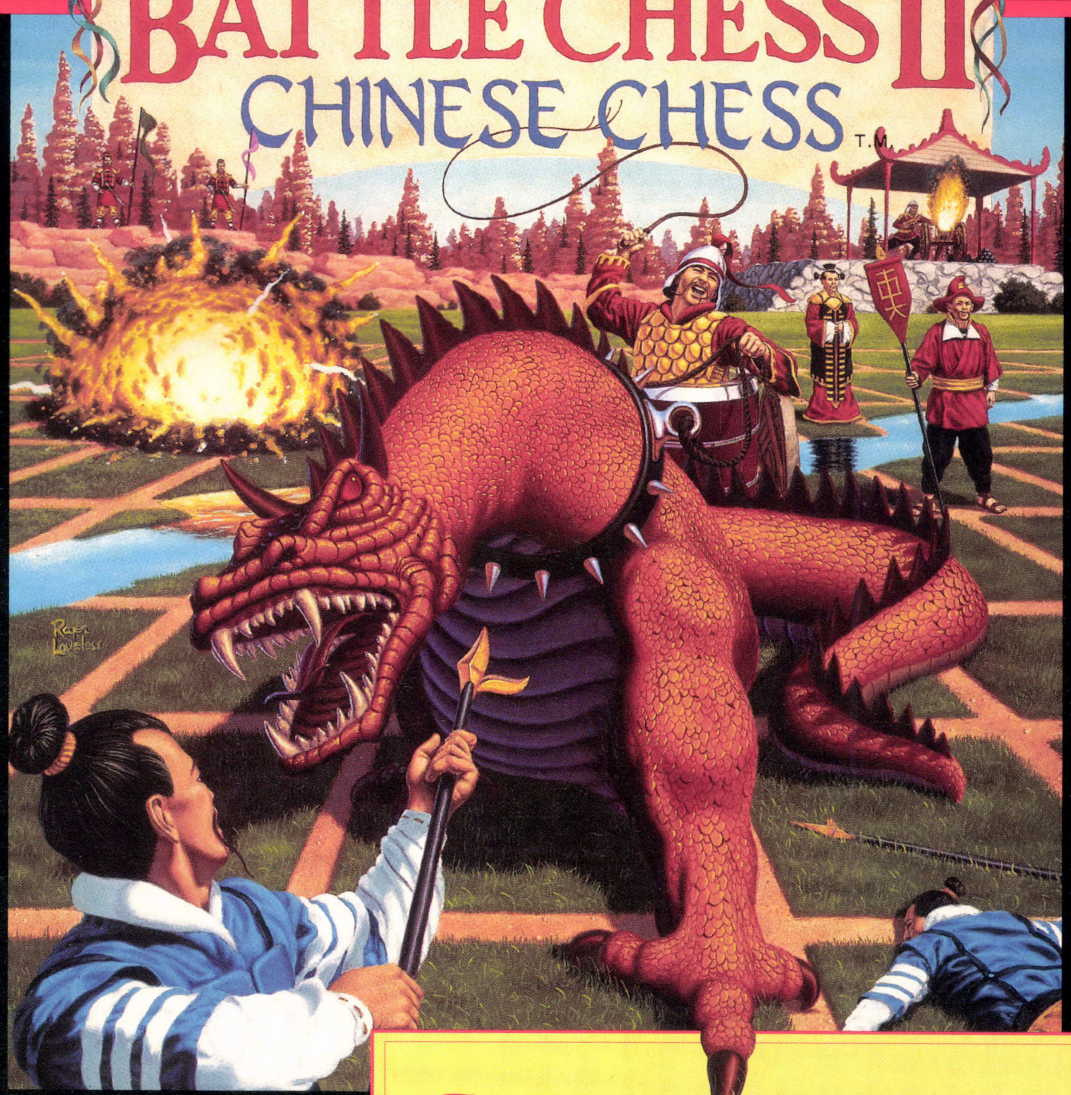

Actual IBM Screens Pictured

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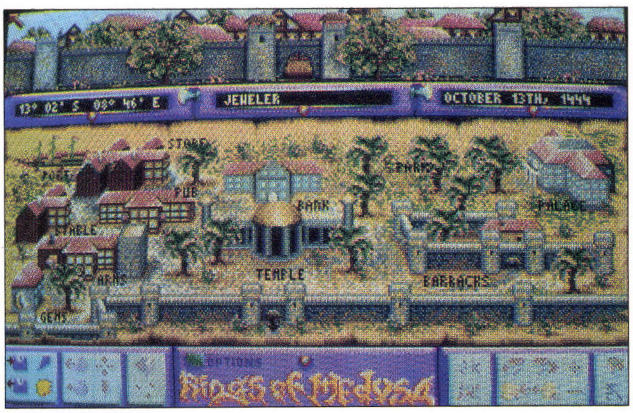
Rings of Medusa

STAR GAMES

Versions: Amiga ($39.95), Atari ST ($39.95), Commodore 64 ($39.95), IBM PC ($49.95)

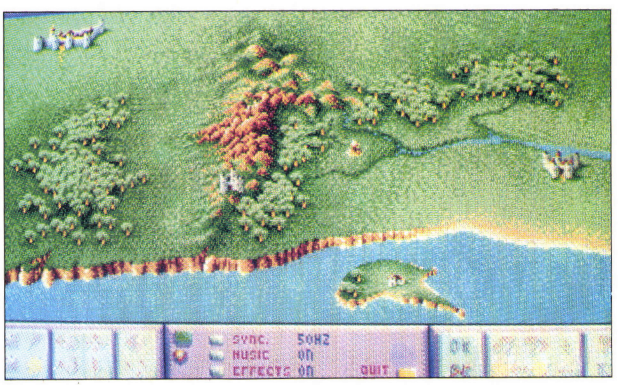
SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10

The packaging for *Rings of Medusa* does a distinctly inadequate job of communicating the nature of the product inside. A look at the back of the box would give most gamers the impression of a lightweight adventure containing a few imbedded arcade games and a gambling module for acquiring filthy lucre. Nothing could be further from the truth.



***Rings of Medusa*, by Star Games, is one of the most detailed multilevel simulations ever published. It will keep most gamers enthralled for months.**

Rings of Medusa is, in fact, one of the most detailed multilevel simulations ever published; too detailed, perhaps, for the majority of adventure fans. If, on the other hand, intricately modeled adventure simulations containing everything from complex war-gaming to an ongoing search for raw materials is your cup of mead, *Medusa* will keep you enthralled for months.



The player is cast as Prince Cirion, whose kingdom of Morenor has been tainted by the evil goddess Medusa, striking out from her residence in the Underworld. The once storybook realm is suddenly torn by revolution as Medusa imposes her malign will upon Morenor's populace. The only way to retake the kingdom is to locate five powerful rings, which can then be used to summon up the goddess and face her down.

Alas, Morenor is a pretty poor place and, in the tradition of adventure games, the player-character starts out with all but empty pockets. In order to find the rings, it is necessary for the Prince to raise an army. Raising an army, of course, requires money, and this can be acquired by establishing trade routes, attacking caravans, conquering towns and looting them, exploiting raw materials, uncovering treasure and, of course, visiting the kingdom's gambling casino.

The five rings, in addition to their collective ability to invoke Medusa from her underworld sanctum, each grant the Prince some special ability. The first produces a display of both armies' strength; the second reveals to the player which goods are produced in each town; the third gives the Prince the ability to scout all towns, no matter how far away; the fourth increases the strength of the Prince's army by 50%; and the fifth allows him to summon Medusa.

Rings of Medusa employs several visual presentations, including a two-thirds overview of Morenor, a first-person perspective for sea battles and the traditional top-down view during gambling sequences. The game is played largely through a series of icons and commands that appear at the base of the screen. Unfortunately, the game's interface is its weakest element. Non-experts will spend much of their time learning how to operate the system. The documentation does not clearly present the information, and many gamers will be discouraged and frustrated by the difficulties involved in getting started.

Nonetheless, adventure and war-gaming fans, in addition to those who measure

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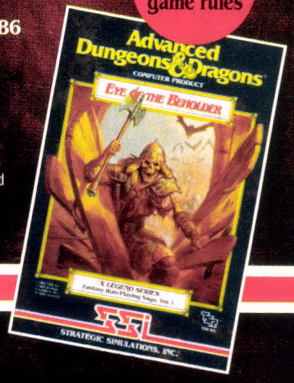

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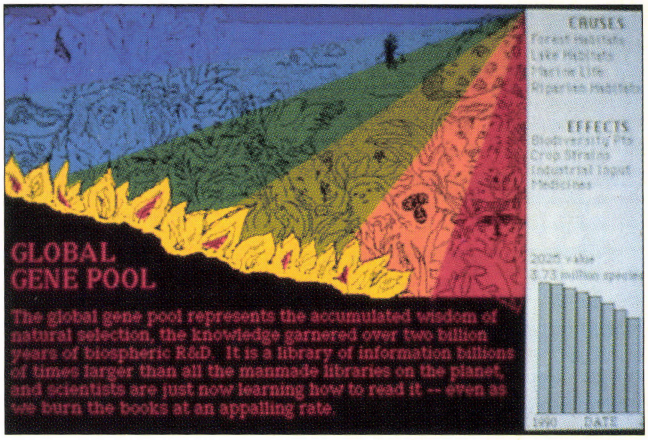
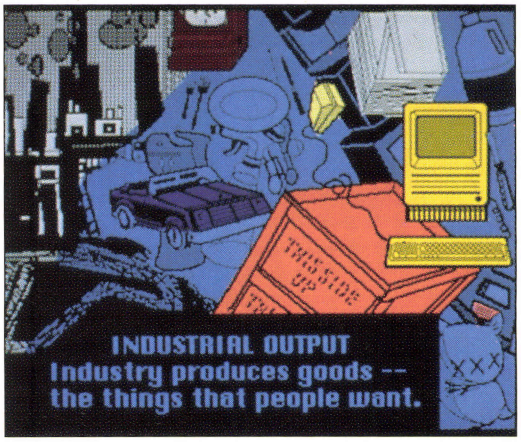
Balance of the Planet

CHRIS CRAWFORD

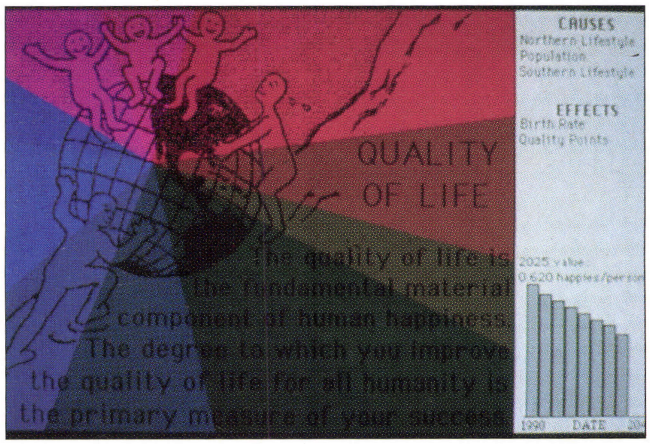
Versions: IBM PC ($49.95), Macintosh ($49.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10





Ecology is the "in" thing today. People are showing more concern than ever before about what happens to the environment. In an effort to provide insight into the problems that threaten our planet, Chris Crawford created and has self-published a simulation titled *Balance of the Planet*, currently available from Accolade's distribution department.



The world finally tired of the Earth's environmental situation, and the U.N. put the player in charge of a massive effort to clean up the mess. Unfortunately, the world is not ready to foot the bill for the cleanup and instead requires the effort to be totally self-funded.

Taxes can be levied and are useful for limiting certain harmful activities, such as the production of chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) that harm the ozone layer. They also provide needed funds for the budget. Part of these funds must cover costs of damage already done to the environment, but the majority are used to finance promising research, such as solar energy and material recycling.

Balance of the Planet is rich with equations, 150 in all. Though they are all interrelated and open for inspection, it takes quite a while for would-be environmentalists to learn just what will straighten out the world situation.

Taking on the environmental state of Earth, Chris Crawford, one of the best-known game designers of all time, has created *Balance of the Planet*, which does for ecology what his earlier *Balance of Power* did for politics.

Much of the game information is presented in a series of 150 different screens, each showing one factor affecting the world's environmental situation. The art has a rather simple and stylistic feel to it. Mr. Crawford used this kind of screen work intentionally to focus on the issues at hand, rather than on fancy graphics.

The informative screens provide a good bit of background detail, and two present most action during the simulation. The policy summary screen shows the various tax rates, damage costs and subsidies levels. The results screen provides feedback on the actions taken during the last turn. Positive points are given for success in areas ranging from bio diversity to quality of life. Negative points are accrued for undesirable outcomes, such as starvation and lung disease. The user starts with a total of 0 points, and even successful players will see this value drop into negatives at an alarming rate for the first few turns.

It is questionable whether *Balance of the Planet* has the best interface for the issues at hand. While the hypertext system shows a lot of information, it is very easy to get lost in all the help screens. It can be difficult to get a grasp of exactly what the results are of changing the different game settings. The user can view and adjust any of the 150 equations that govern the game's behavior. But actually figuring out how to achieve a positive point total is very difficult, requiring a deeper understanding of the system than most gamers are willing to spend the time to acquire.

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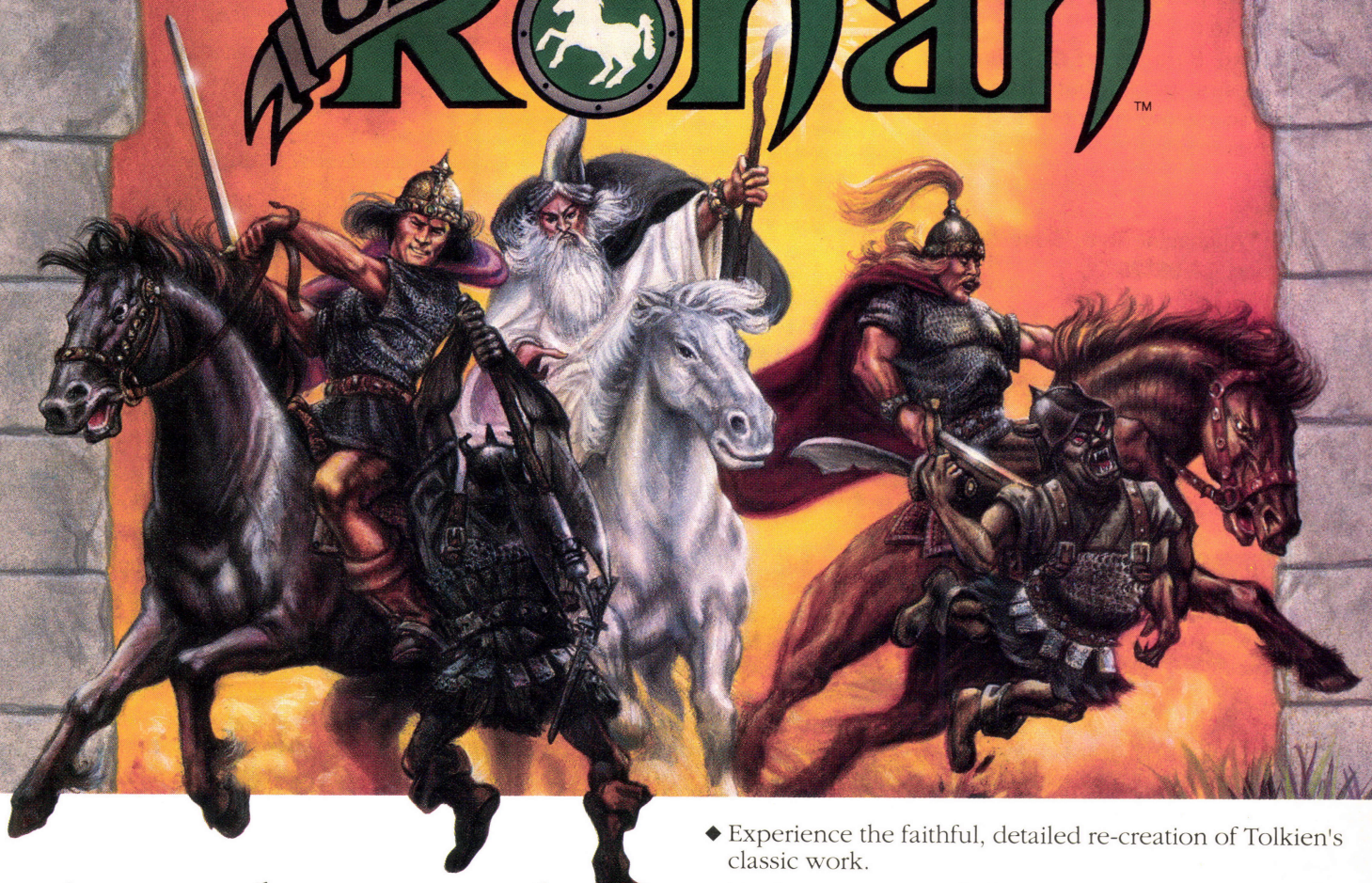

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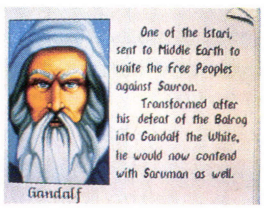

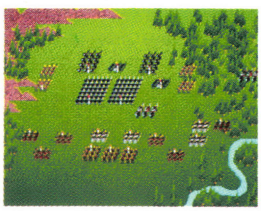

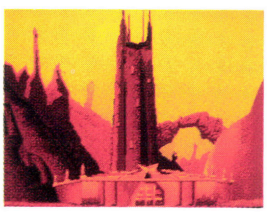

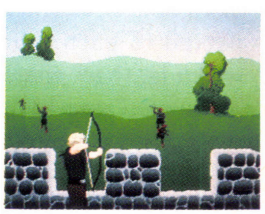

System Requirements: IBM PC, true IBM compatibles. DOS 2.1 or higher. 512K RAM, MCGA, VGA, EGA or Tandy graphics card. 5.25" and 3.5" disks available. Amiga and Atari STE. Mouse optional. Ad Lib card support.

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CIRCLE #181 ON READER SERVICE CARD

Many of the assumptions made in the default formulae lean toward the views of the environmentalist movement. Some of it is debatable. The game does feature three other preset bias files, each with its own set of equations and development priorities, and all formulae can be adjusted to anything the user desires. There is a lot of flexibility here.

Once again Chris Crawford has stretched the boundaries of game design. Much of his innovation is away from the mainstream, and this may lose some of his traditional followers. But some people enjoy this type of simulation, and perhaps he will draw new people into the field.

Calling *Balance of the Planet* a game is stretching it, but this simulation is an interesting look at this important area of popular concern.

—R. Bradley Andrews

Accolade
650 S. Winchester Blvd., Suite 200
San Jose, CA 95128
(408) 985-1700

Harmony

ACCOLADE

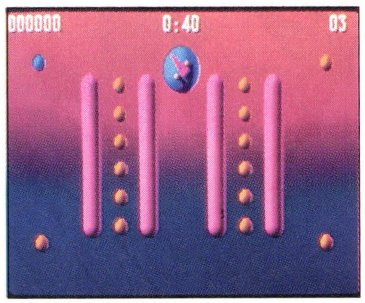
Versions: Amiga ($29.95), Atari ST ($29.95), Commodore 64 ($29.95), IBM PC ($44.95)

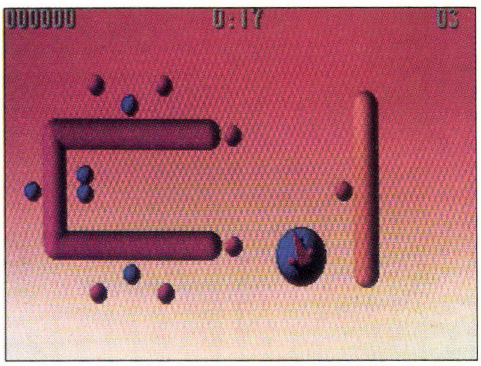
SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10

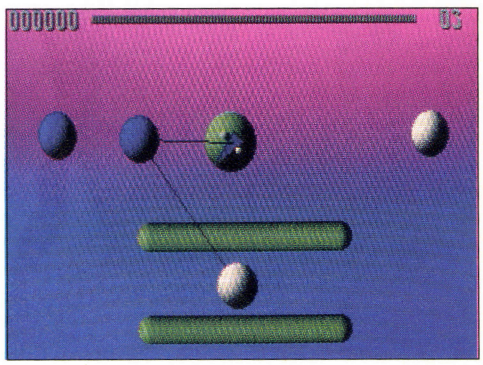
This game lives up to its name, both conceptually and graphically. Described on the box as "A New Age Challenge," Accolade designers specifically sought to counter the destruction that typifies many games. Not that things don't go blooey all over the place in *Harmony*; they can and do. But the object is to minimize uncontrolled devastation, and this is best done by calm, harmonious manipulation of the game elements.

Floating on-screen are energy spheres of various sizes and colors, frequently connected to each other by elastic strings, which let them share or transfer their momentum. There are also fixed barriers off which the colorful balls bounce. Push one ball and others attached to it also move. The player uses a hovering disc with a pointer on it to herd the spheres in the desired directions. It, too, may be connected to one or more of the spheres.

All the action is accompanied by music appropriate to the New Age concept, created when the balls interact with each other. (You might call it the Music of the Spheres.) The software supports Roland, AdLib and OMS sound boards, and any MIDI device.







Accolade's *Harmony* takes the passive approach to game play, requiring the player to calmly analyze the situation at hand and try to bump matching spheres together to eliminate them from the screen.

There is more to *Harmony* than just pushing colored marbles through space. When two like-colored energy spheres collide, they harmonize; the docs describe this as a "grateful, musical sigh." The player must bring this happy oblivion to all spheres on screen in order to move to the next level.

If two balls of different colors bump into each other, they create a third, smaller sphere, called a pod. For the first three seconds, the player may gobble it for added energy; after that it expands into a new sphere. Things could get cluttered, except for one thing: pulse time. If energy spheres are not united within a certain time limit, they begin to pulsate, faster and faster, until they explode. This is, of course, nonharmonious behavior, and the player loses energy (measured on a gauge across the top of the screen.)

The player wins bonus points for getting through each level, and there are bonus levels with special instructions and challenging arrangements of pods. The player starts with four lives and earns an additional life for every 20,000 bonus points.

Unfortunately, the mechanics leave something to be desired. The controller disc is driven by a method similar to

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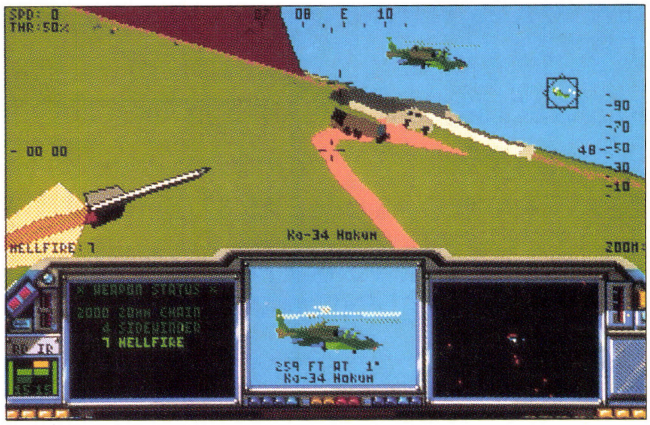
CIRCLE #182 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

Space War or *Asteroids*. The pointer is turned the desired direction and then given thrust to move. Only practice makes this approach comfortable. Either joystick or keyboard may be used.

Accolade uses the copy protection technique of printing look-up information on red-chocolate paper (so it can't be photocopied). This is difficult to see in normal light, even for players with reasonably good vision. It's bearable when the information is text or numbers. But in this case, Accolade presents 24 screen pictures of energy spheres and pods. To boot the game, one of these must be identified by number. This is extremely difficult, especially since there are several with quite similar appearance.



Once past the copy protection gauntlet, when the techniques of maneuvering the seeker are mastered, the player begins the learning curve. Over and over, the player is urged to relax, to seek the elegant solution: tension leads only to disharmony. Try it. You may learn to like a little more harmony in your life!

—Ross Chamberlain

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(408) 985-1700

LHX Attack Chopper

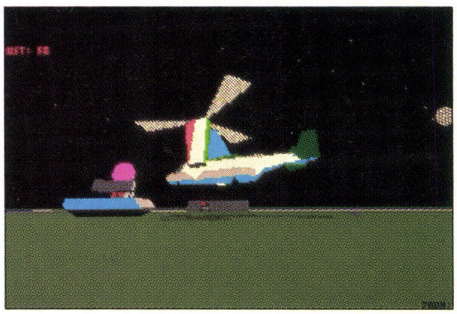
ELECTRONIC ARTS

Version: IBM PC ($59.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10

Move over *Gunship*; there's a new standard by which all helicopter simulations will be judged. *LHX Attack Chopper* is a seat-of-the-pants, completely engrossing simulation of four separate aircraft. Players may opt to fly the Apache, the Blackhawk, the Osprey (experimental tilt rotor aircraft) or the LHX, a prototype light attack helicopter that incorporates stealth technology. Each features meticulously detailed cockpits with unique handling and weapons characteristics.

Unlike many of its predecessors, *LHX* does not require memorization of an inordinate amount of commands simply to fly the aircraft. The player controls rotor thrust with the function keys; yaw and pitch are controlled by the joystick. Flight simulator purists may initially scoff at the apparent simplicity of these controls, until



Many will consider Electronic Arts' *LHX Attack Chopper*, an engrossing game that provides a lot of replay value and depth, as the new standard by which future helicopter simulations should be judged.

they get into the scenarios. Then the action is so intense that the elegance of one-handed flight is both necessary and transitory (if one takes sufficient damage).

Three tours of duty are available: Libya, Southeast Asia and the East German buffer zone. There are 14 basic mission types, but virtually limitless possibilities. The type and disposition of opposition varies with the theater of operations selected, the area of the map the mission objective is set in and the type of airframe the player chooses to fly. In this respect, *LHX Attack Chopper* has a great deal of depth and replay value.

Individual missions may involve POW rescues, supply drops, sanitizing landing zones, sanctions against enemy leaders (ever dream of getting Kaddafi in your sights?), surgical strikes, aerial intercepts and more. Players also control the difficulty setting, which has a major impact on density and skill of the enemy. Aviation experts may think they can start this program at the higher skill levels, but they are

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Bluefield, WV

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—Electronic Gamer

Mean Streets is a dazzling product! A showpiece game for VGA machines.
—Video Games and Computer Entertainer

Mean Streets' Real Sound's quality of music, voice & special effects beats anything I've heard from my "Ad Lib"™...hands down!
—H. Nichols
CPAA

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—Game Player's Strategy

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CIRCLE #183 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

in for a shock. After 60 hours of play, the easy level still holds unexpected challenges, and the expert level remains overwhelming.

Once a mission is selected, the screen zooms in from the overhead map display until the player is sitting in the cockpit. The graphic display is 3-D polygon fill. This technique is not innovative, but *LHX* scrolls so smoothly that depth perception problems are nonexistent. The gamer is completely convinced of a 360-degree, 3-D environment.

The player sees incoming tracer rounds, hears them thump into his aircraft (particularly with an Adlib sound board) and watches his instruments shatter from the shock waves. Missiles leave the rail with a satisfying whoosh and streak to their targets, leaving blackened craters in their aftermath.

The player watches the action from numerous viewpoints outside the cockpit: above, behind or circling the aircraft, from the nose of a missile, the ground or even from the perspective of the enemy currently targeted. Whichever view is selected, the pilot still retains full control of the aircraft, albeit without seeing the instruments.

Night and reduced-visibility flying are also included. One such night mission over the desert of Libya, amidst a sky full of stars and riding the heavy thermal drafts close to the sand, left me breathless with its realism.

There are only two minor gripes. Explosions sound unnatural, like someone hitting a tin roof with a baseball bat. And, it is necessary to type all the options desired from the DOS prompt every time the game is booted.

LHX Attack Chopper is a superlative offering that should not be missed!

—Ed Dille

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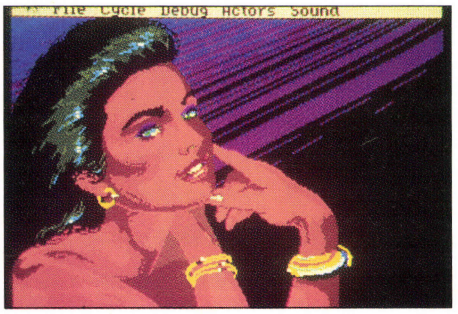


Nerdy Larry Laffer returns to action in the latest installment of Sierra's hilarious adventure series, though *Leisure Suit Larry III: Passionate Patti in Pursuit of Pulsating Pectorals* introduces a female counterpart to the story.

Leisure Suit Larry III: Passionate Patti in Pursuit of Pulsating Pectorals

SIERRA ON-LINE

Versions: Amiga ($59.95), Atari ST ($59.95), IBM PC ($59.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10

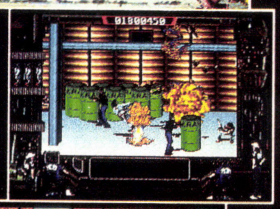
Welcome back, fellow Lounge Lizards! Last scene (pun intended), Larry Laffer was living it up on Nonooky Island. Content in the married life (our Larry?), it was inevitable that things would not last. True to form, Sierra gleefully tosses Larry's life back in the dumpster and prods players to pull it out again.

Leisure Suit Larry III picks up soon after its predecessor left off. Larry's wife has left him for a woman and thrown him out of the house, and his father-in-law has fired him. Destitute and depressed, Larry must begin a new path to happiness.

As in all Sierra adventures, the proper path is far from obvious. Many puzzles are somewhat obscure, but persistence and observation of one's surroundings always pays off. As an example, who would think that a dull and useless knife could be sharpened on the steps of the casino? It is not always possible to enter locations on the first attempt; others must be visited several times. If access is denied in an area, it's because an item is missing or some action has yet to occur. In this manner, the game keeps the player from getting ahead of the plot without being excessively linear. The exception to the rule is Patti, whose sequences are completely linear.

Larry's first stop on the road to happiness should be the Comedy Club, where it's possible to talk to the game's designers. Touches like this reflect the tongue-in-cheek approach to design that made Sierra famous. *Leisure Suit Larry III* is replete with this brand of welcomed humor. In the

CRIME Wave



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end game, players also drop in on the *Police Quest III* and *Space Quest III* sets.

Gamers receive points for specific actions, and a running tally is kept against the total (4,000). Larry has the opportunity—no, the obligation—to make out with five different women, the last of whom is Patti. After they make love, Larry runs off into the bamboo jungle, and the player assumes the persona of Patti. This character change is both unique and interesting, as it forces male players to think like females to complete the game.

Patti needs to get dressed, stock up on provisions and be prepared for that magical moment when she finds Larry. Before venturing off into the bamboo forest, she also needs to visit Chip 'n' Dales.

The bamboo forest is frustrating and difficult to map, because every screen is virtually identical. Once through the forest, Patti must deal with several natural obstacles (this is where thinking like a woman really pays off) before coming to the river. Players must guide Patti down the river in an upsetting arcade sequence. Fortunately, the designers took pity on the average adventure gamer and included the ability to save at any point.

Leisure Suit Larry III places a heavier emphasis on sex than its predecessors, but the Sierra age-verification process is still intact. Furthermore, none of the situations portrayed transcend moral boundaries established in mediums like television. One should simply be aware that this is not the *Bugs Bunny Show*.

Leisure Suit Larry III has a user-friendly mouse interface, and the graphic presentation is equivalent to the other Sierra offerings. Novices will find the puzzles difficult, but experienced adventurers should enjoy the challenge.

—E. D.

Sierra On-Line
P.O. Box 485
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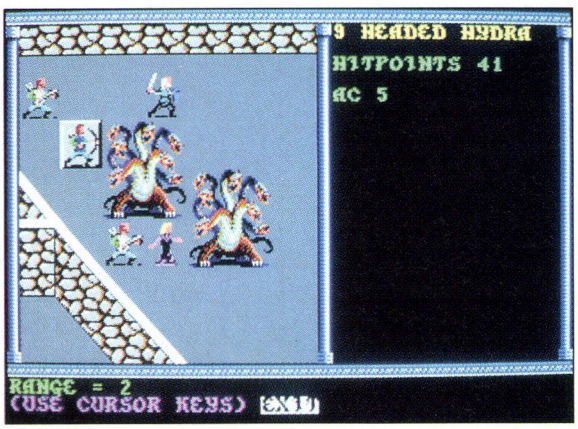
Advanced Dungeons & Dragons: Secret of the Silver Blades

STRATEGIC SIMULATIONS, INC.

Versions: Commodore 64 ($39.95); IBM PC ($49.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10

SSI successfully continues its *Forgotten Realms* series of games with *Secret of the Silver Blades*, giving the player a lot of quality questing and ample challenge.



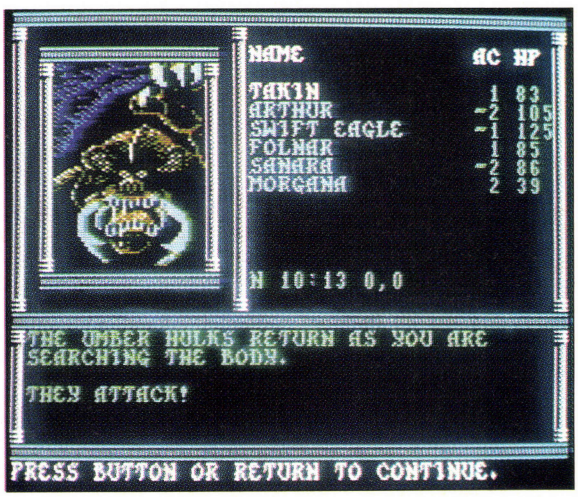
Secret of the Silver Blades, the third segment of the *Forgotten Realms* series, requires the player to destroy an ancient evil loosed upon the world. Apparently, the terrified miners of Dragonspine Mountain unwittingly dug into unhallowed ground and released a nasty band of bloodthirsty creatures. The miners called upon the Well of Knowledge to send them a hero. This scenario sets up the player's task, one far more difficult than the last two *Forgotten Realms* adventures, maybe even too difficult.

The player can create a party from scratch or import existing characters from an earlier *Forgotten Realms* story. If creating from scratch, the player selects each member's class, race, alignment and so on, in order to build a well-rounded team.

The game begins in the miners' town, where the party gets initial instructions. From then on, the village is the place to rest, memorize spells or buy and sell various treasures.

During the adventure, the player chooses between an overhead view of his surroundings or a three-dimensional perspective. The player must also constantly monitor the characters' vital signs and positions within the party. All encounters center on the lead character, so gamers have to learn who to put on point at what time if they are to succeed.

Fighting in *Secret of the Silver Blades* is tactical and probably the hardest aspect of the game. The player sets up each character's objective: where he'll stand, what



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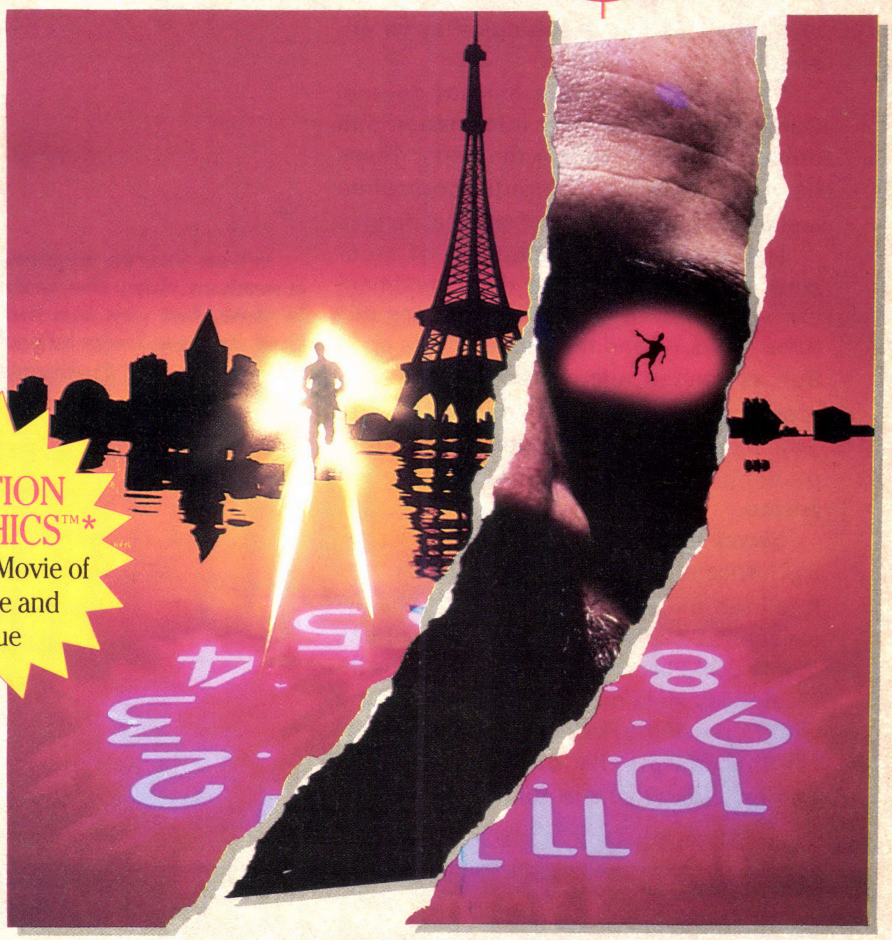

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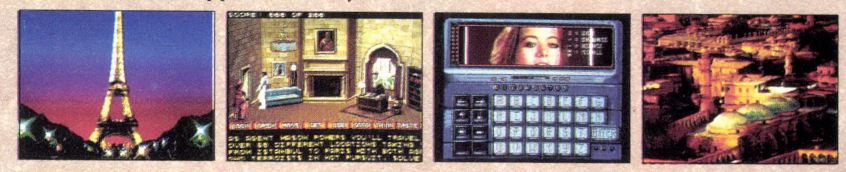

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he'll hold, where he'll aim, what spell he'll cast, etc. Once done, the player may opt to allow the computer to control his characters based upon the settings they've entered.

Not all monsters are evil, of course. Some give players vital information and others even offer to join the party. These new members are computer-controlled and often flee at the sign of any real danger.

The graphic representations of monsters and scenery are well-done and imaginative. However, movement of these pictures is blocky, and the sound effects poor. But, as veteran role players know, *AD&D* movement is based on segmented motion. Therefore, fluid motion and mind-blowing sound effects aren't really expected.

Secret of the Silver Blades is an incredibly intricate, all-encompassing adventure. It follows the *AD&D* principles for character control, experience levels, combat and magic use. Players unfamiliar with this intricate play style may be better off starting with *Curse of the Azure Bonds* to get a feel for the complexity of these types of games. *Secret of the Silver Blades* is a game that takes a lot of time to understand. However, if *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons* interests you, be prepared for the challenge of a lifetime!

—Frank Tetro, Jr.

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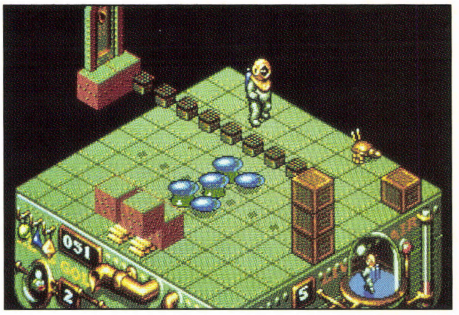
When you're exploring a sunken ship, the action is slow, but you can bet that danger lurks around every bend in Electronic Zoo's *Treasure Trap*.



Treasure Trap

ELECTRONIC ZOO

Versions: Amiga ($39.95), Atari ST ($39.95),IBM ($39.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10

This is the first game in a while to plunge computerists under the sea rather than blast them into outer space, send them through caves or flying through the air. Although numerous games have attempted to explore the watery depths, the oceans have never been as popular to gamers as drier locales. Part of the reason is that, in order to simulate underwater movement, designers have often slowed the action to a dismaying pace. *Treasure Trap* overcomes this problem by giving the player a lot to do while in the water.

Treasure Trap lives up to its name: It places the player in a sunken ship to look for golden treasure while he avoids the many traps and dangers that lurk around every corner. The game is a notable one from a promising new contributor to the game market: Electronic Zoo.

What started as just an idea for a game with a three-quarters perspective turned into a delightful and challenging product. The player controls a diver in his search for gold bars and spare air tanks

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LINKS also includes a practice area for driving, chipping and putting.

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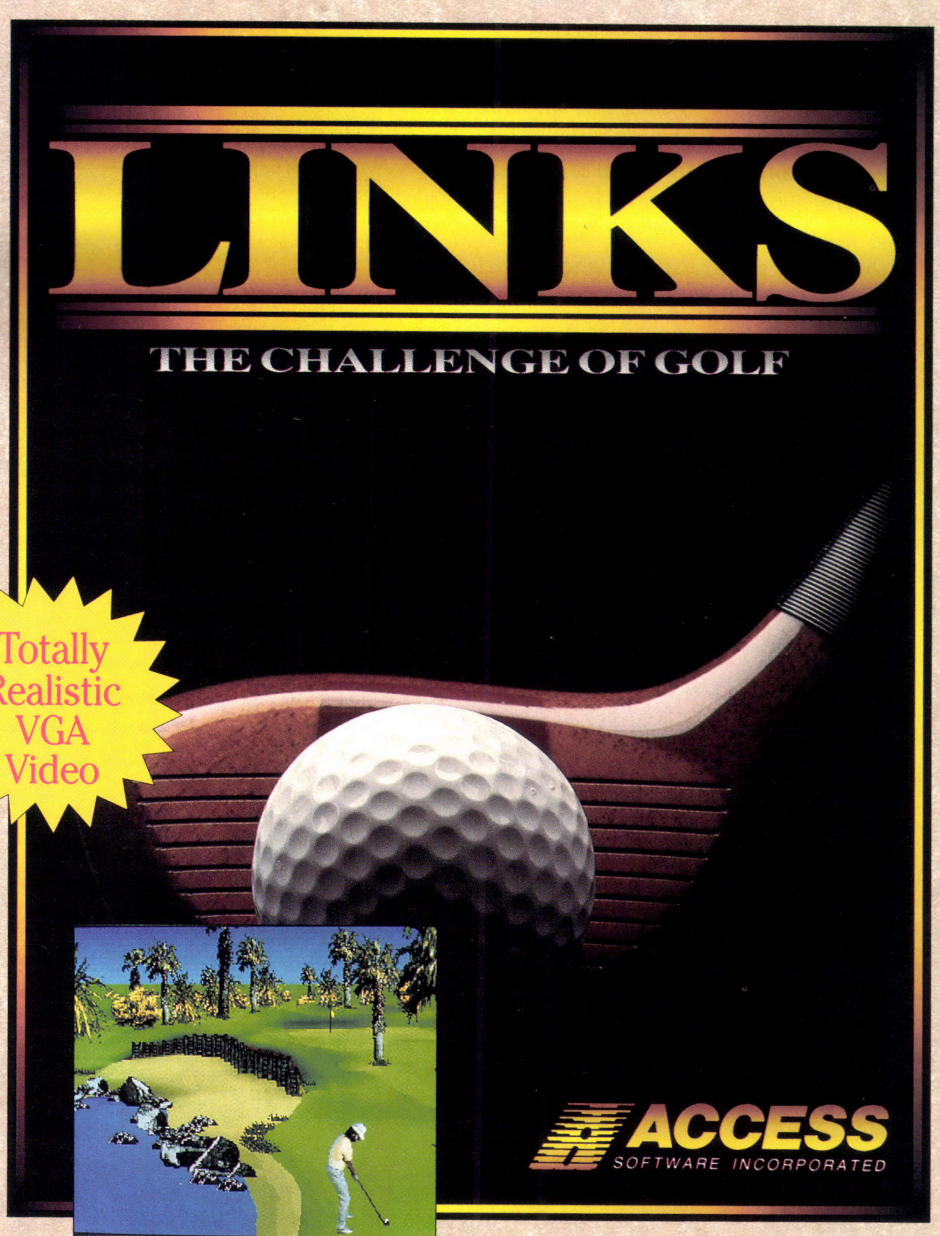
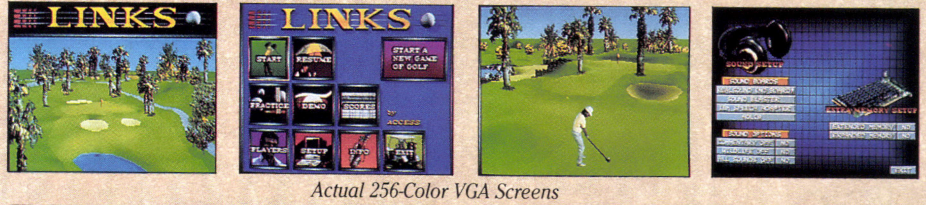


*So Realistic, you'll think you're *there*

LINKS features totally realistic 3D terrain…combining stunning *256-color,* 3-dimensional terrain graphics with *Real Sound*™, the revolutionary technology that gives you astonishing digitized sound effects *without hardware.*



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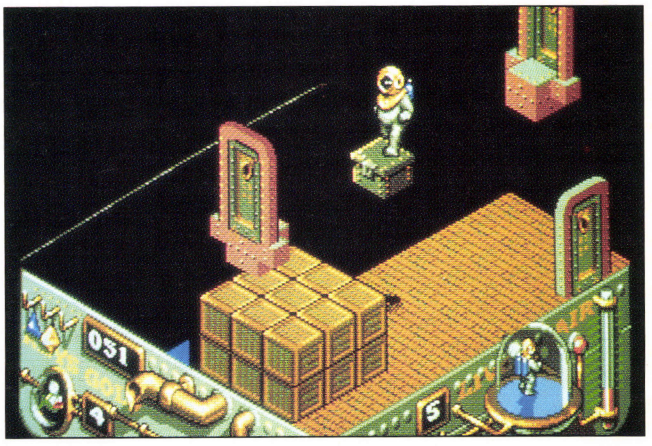
through over 100 rooms. A detailed overhead map can be brought up during the exploration to give a better view of the surroundings.

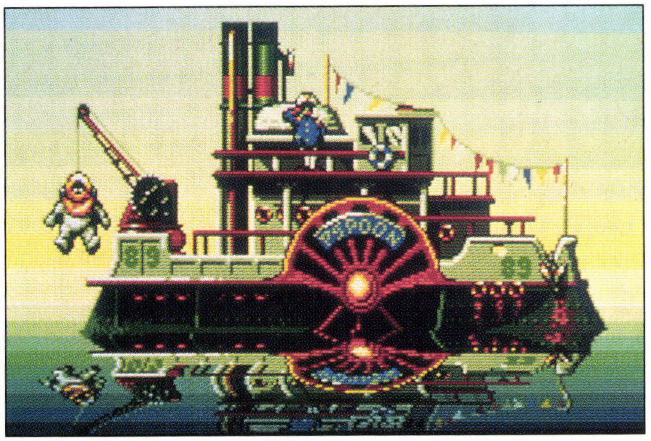
The tough part of playing *Treasure Trap* is the orientation of the screen. Only the diagonal directions of the joystick are used. It would have been better if the game had allowed more freedom with joystick positioning to move the character. However, the ability to redefine keys is built into the interface, and after a few games, any decent arcade gamer will be dodging sea anemones and electric eels with the best of them.



Graphics are detailed and colorful without any fuzziness. Although there may be a lot of objects and creatures moving in a room, it is easy to tell things apart, even in the unusual perspective. Sounds are minimal, but a rousing sailor's theme plays before and after every game. The package deserves mention, especially for the plastic gold nugget and diver's log tablet.

It is fun to figure out the different logical and spatial puzzles in the many rooms. They keep *Treasure Trap* fresh and eliminate boredom even after a couple of hours of undersea adventuring. Now put on your helmet and head below!

—Russ Ceccola



Electronic Zoo, a newcomer to the computer-game scene, takes to the watery depths in search of gold and spare air tanks in *Treasure Trap*.

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Wolfpack

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Version: IBM PC ($54.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	**10**
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10

Wolfpack can only be classified as a genre buster, one of those rare games that sets a new standard for other releases in the same field to live or die by.

The Battle of the North Atlantic has long been a popular topic in other entertainment mediums. One may gain an appreciation of the surface warrior's perspective by reading *The Cruel Sea*, by Nicholas Monsarrat. To discover what life was like on board one of Admiral Doenitz's U-boats, view the film *Das Boot*. Or, if one is truly bold, dive straight into *Wolfpack*, a game that allows play from either side of this pivotal conflict.

The game includes twelve predesigned scenarios, some fictional, to illustrate par-

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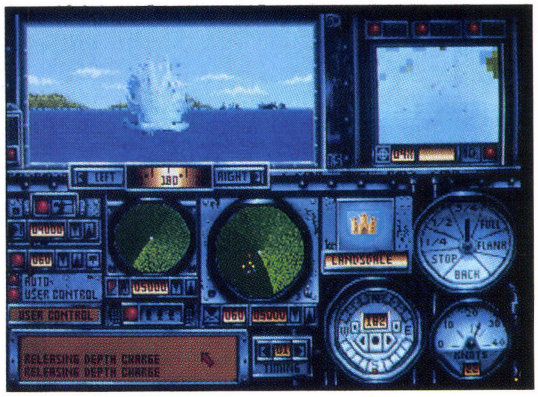
ticular tactics or serve as vehicles to learn the game, some based on actual convoys. In addition, the game includes a versatile scenario editor to allow modification of scenarios, as well as development of entirely new missions. Using these features, enterprising players with a degree of patience can create campaigns.



Missions can be day or night, and the period of the war, which affects the technology available, may be specified. As one might expect, the U-boats possess a distinct advantage early on, but it diminishes rapidly when Allied sonar and radar improvements occur.

During a mission, each unit's commanding officer possesses a distinct personality that impacts upon the unit's tactics. Whether passive, aggressive or somewhere in between, each unit will act independently until the player intervenes. Using the mouse (highly recommended), the player may jump from ship to ship, to coordinate attacks without fear of losing the big picture.

It is best to note which captains are the weakest and intervene on their behalf, leaving the stronger ones to their own devices. One can also sit on the bridge with the existing captain and simply observe his tactics. This illustrates the flexibility of *Wolfpack*; it allows players of varied skill levels to get into the game right away. Experienced players will have a field day, mastering both the destroyers and submarines. The game is deep and because of its complexity, *Wolfpack* should have even more endurance than the classic *Silent Service* (Microprose).

There is a strong difference between the VGA and EGA displays in this product. While the latter is all right, close-up views of the ships tend to be a blocky. The difference is not strong enough to discourage EGA owners, but VGA owners do receive much nicer visuals.

Operating at night under a cloud canopy with a few stars peeking through, the gamer sees the distant fires of ships sinking on the horizon. One hears (with the aid of an Adlib board) the reassuring rumble of the diesels, and the disconcerting thump and ripple of distant depth charges and hedgehogs falling on your brethren. The merchant you've been shadowing is wallowing like a fat duck. Below, there is a satisfying whoosh as the silver fish streaks toward its prey. Soon the clank of metal on metal precedes the billowing explosion that blossoms from the tankers belly. Get the picture? Don't miss it!

—E. D.

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COMPUTER STRATEGIES

How to Win in Harmony

ACCOLADE

Versions: Amiga, Atari ST, Commodore 64, IBM PC

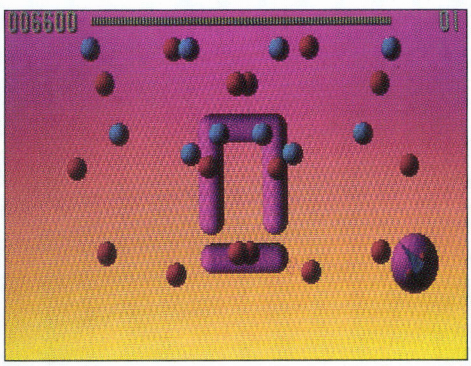
Accolade's latest arcade challenge is one of those easy-to-learn, difficult-to-master games. The player must maneuver a seeker around a world of colorful spheres, then knock like-colored balls into one another until they're gone. Unfortunately, getting these little buggers to go in a certain direction is not as easy as it sounds.

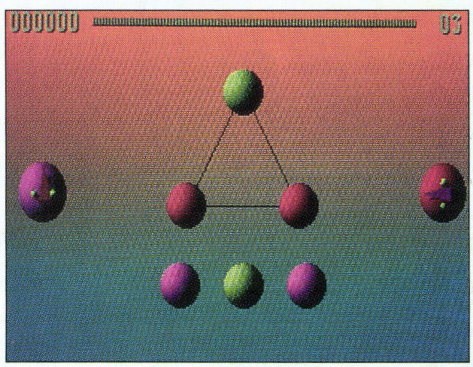
The first couple of rounds give the player a chance to get a feel for how things work and to practice the ship's controls. The seeker rotates in tiny increments, which is good for a veteran player, but difficult for the novice. The ship flies much like the old *Asteroids* craft. The longer the space bar is held, the more thrust is applied, and the faster the ship travels. The small turns and banking abilities the gamer practices early will be used a lot in the latter stages.

Once a player gets comfortable maneuvering the ship, it's time to start banging the spheres around. A sphere moves in exactly the opposite angle it was hit. For example, to send a sphere to the upper right at a 45-degree angle, it must be hit from the lower left at that precise angle. This type of control takes time to master.

Start off tapping the spheres lightly rather than smashing them. If a level has obstacles in it, try to bounce the spheres off the obstacles into their respective counterparts.

Accolade's *Harmony* is following the trend of some game developers of intense strategy and non-violent action, though the frustration level for the player is still as high.





If a sphere collides with a different colored pod, it produces a small pod of yet another color. The player can increase the seeker's energy if he immediately runs over this small pod. After five seconds the pod increases to normal size. If it does not have a match on the screen, the player has no choice but to wait for it to explode, which costs valuable energy.

Some screens feature spheres connected by a sort of black rubber band. Use caution when bumping these balls. Moving one pod has an effect on the one it's connected to. Concentrate on matching one of each of the connected spheres quickly; doing so will eliminate the rubber band. If you bump a sphere that is connected off the screen, the

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band will reappear across the entire playfield and send the pods flying at each other at high speed.

Finally, at every fourth round, the player gets a chance to earn extra points in a bonus run. Here, the seeker must grab only the blue spheres, while avoiding the orange ones. The trick is to take it slow and use short spurts of thrust to maneuver toward each pod. Too much thrust will cause the player to overshoot a pod and most probably hit an orange one by mistake, thus ending the round.

—Frank Tetro, Jr.

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Be a Champ at Making Faces

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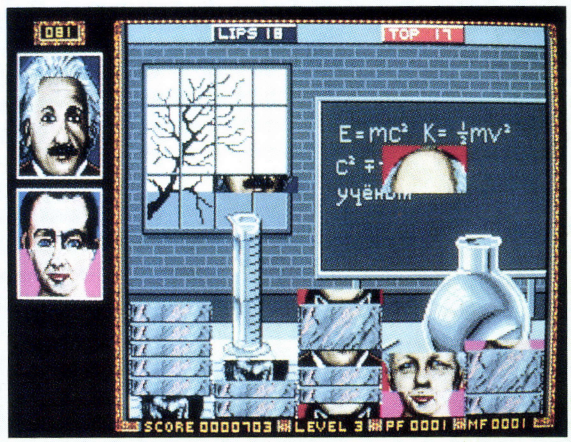
Versions: IBM PC, Macintosh

In this third intriguing Soviet challenge, the player maneuvers falling pieces in order to build a perfect face. Placing a piece incorrectly destroys the face, and the player must start a new one over the old. As with the other tumbling block games from Russia, the game ends once a column reaches the top of the screen.

For high scores in *Faces*, concentrate on building as many perfect mugs as possible early in the game. Start by dropping the first two pieces one click to the right of where they originally began falling. By doing this, the left piece drops in the center column. This is crucial because two falling pieces may only be moved independently if there is a piece between them. Therefore, using the center position early on lets the player better maneuver subsequent facial parts.

As pieces fall, remember that they can be rotated in position, as well as swapped. If the pieces that fall do not fit perfectly, try swapping them to get a perfect match. If a piece still doesn't fit, try to drop it in the lowest column so it's not in the way.

In the first two rounds, it's often better to let a piece that isn't a perfect match slide by, and wait for the right piece. Don't worry about building up the columns yet. The points you gain by waiting for the perfect faces will make up for it. It is by building these faces that the debris in each column is cleared. Keep in mind that a wrong face removes only one piece of debris, while a perfect face clears a column all the way to the next face.



***Faces*, the third in the series of games to come out of the puzzling mind of Alexey Pajitnov, follows the same style that was initiated with *Tetris*, pushing the player to the limit of endurance and brain power.**

At Level 4 and above, things get faster, and the pieces become harder to distinguish from one another. To compensate, focus your eyes on the top row as the pieces fall, to get an immediate readout of each piece. Another way to see which piece goes with which face is to match the colors of falling segments. Line up all the reds with the reds and so on.

Finally, if things get too hairy, there is a way to cheat slightly. Once two pieces appear, observe what they are and quickly pause the game. This allows players time to figure out where to put the pieces. It's probably not what the pause feature was designed for, but, after all, who's gonna know?

—F.T., Jr.

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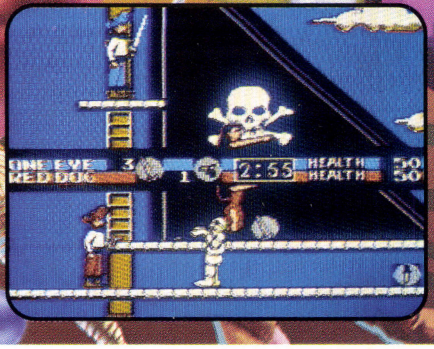

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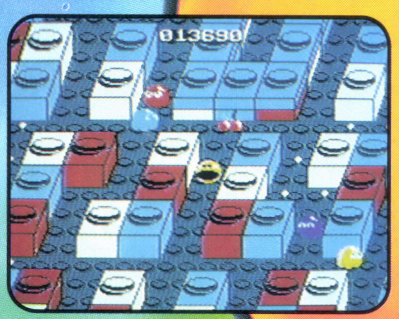

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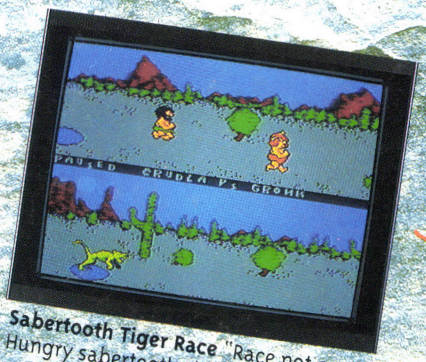
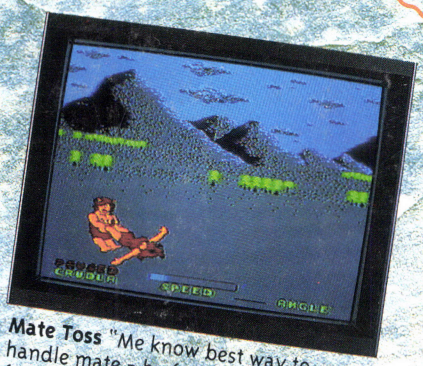


Sabertooth Tiger Race "Race not easy. Hungry sabertooth chase me. But me use competitor as shield. Better him cat food than me kitty litter." - Glunk

Clubbing "Me love bashing - have best club. Cavemen head only thing harder than club. But hard to aim with head. So use club." - Gronk



Mate Toss "Me know best way to handle mate - by feet. Grab mate by feet and spin, spin, spin - then let go. Make world record." - Crudla

Dino Race "Me best dino jockey. Before race, tell dino he no win, me make dino steaks for dinner - and he guest of honor. He run good." - Ugha

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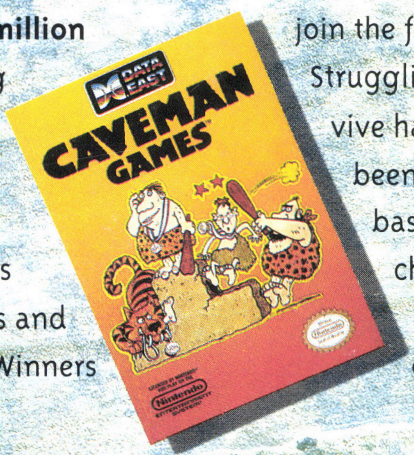

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